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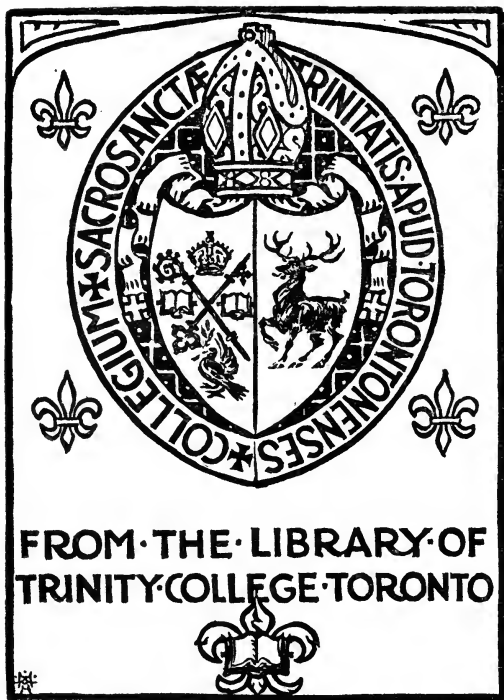
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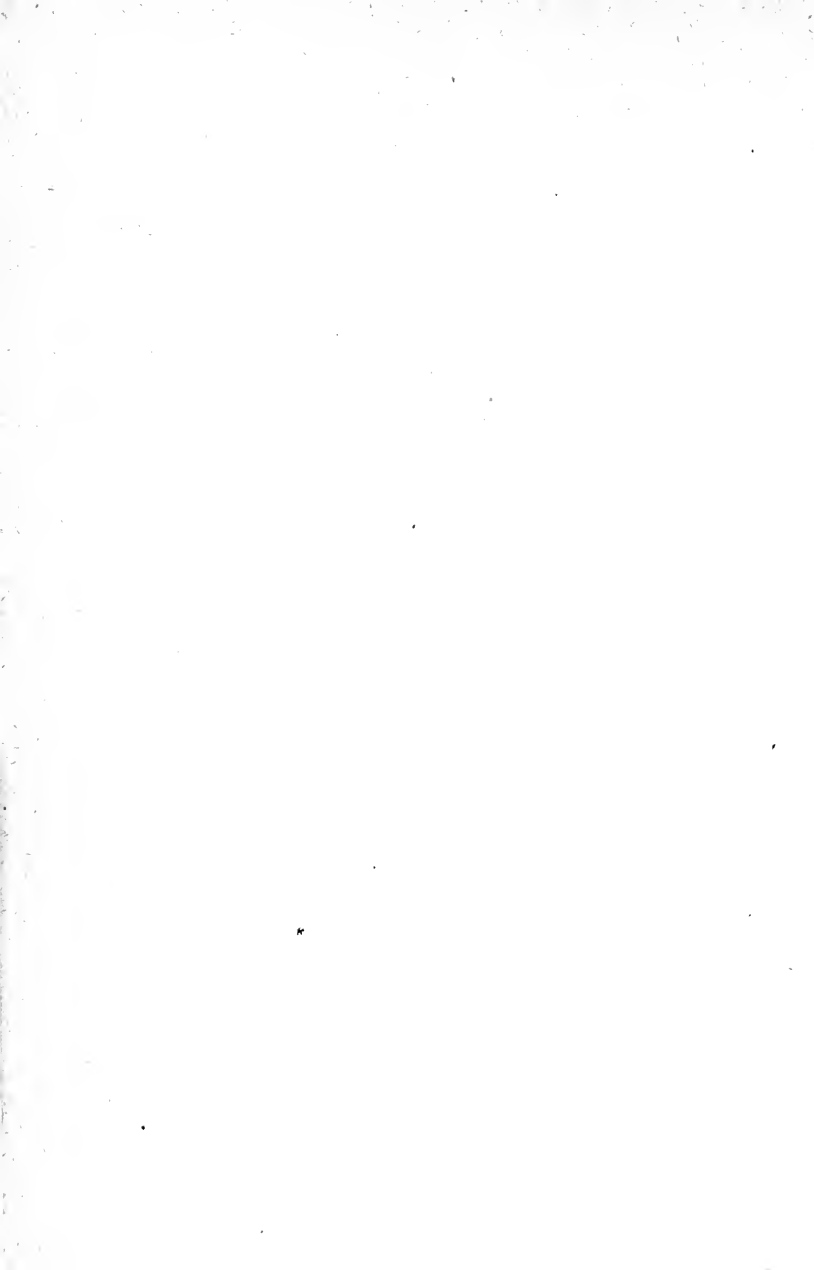




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ADDRESSES  
TO YOUNG CLERGYMEN.





ADDRESSES  
TO YOUNG CLERGYMEN.

DELIVERED AT SALISBURY,  
SEPT. 29 AND 30, OCT. 1 AND 2, 1875.

BY  
C. J. VAUGHAN, D.D.  
MASTER OF THE TEMPLE,  
AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN.

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TO  
MY YOUNG BROTHERS IN THE MINISTRY  
WHO HAVE SOUGHT MY HELP  
AT DONCASTER OR THE TEMPLE  
IN PREPARING FOR THEIR FIRST ORDINATION,  
THIS RECORD  
OF A DELIGHTFUL MEETING WITH SOME OF THEM  
IS DEDICATED  
IN LOVING AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE.



## P R E F A C E.

I FEEL that a word of explanation, and even of apology, ought to preface this publication.

In a Sermon preached at Cambridge on Trinity Sunday, 1861, after a strong expression of the opinion that the *science* of Theology, its doctrine, literature, and history, ought to be studied at the University, the following passage occurred :—

“ But has not Theology its art as well as its science? Does it come naturally to any man, when once he is master of Scriptural doctrine, to manage a Parochial School, to organize Parochial visiting, to catechize the young, to visit the sick, or to prepare and to preach Sermons? It may be so with some few men. There may be those who are gifted with these great aptitudes, and whom special training in these matters would rather cramp than aid. But surely this is not a common,

certainly it is not the normal, condition of a Candidate for Holy Orders. Certainly it is not the course pursued by a student of law, or tolerated in a student of medicine. To expect it in this one instance is to expect a miracle. To act upon this expectation is to hand over one Parish after another to be experimented upon by an untaught empiric, and to prevent one Clergyman after another from ever rising out of the awkwardnesses of a perpetual beginner, or (at best) the eccentricities and mannerisms of a self-instructed genius. Surely these are powers best and most safely acquired in the observation of their exercise. And where is the experienced Pastor who would not gladly take under his general direction, from time to time, three or four Candidates for Holy Orders? Great joy would it carry to the heart of one Parochial Clergyman—for him I can answer—to receive applications of such a nature; to find that there were men of blameless character, of steady purpose, of open mind and of true devotion, who were willing to take up their abode in his Parish, before Ordination, to see what he could

show them, and to render to him such services, in his Schools and amongst his poor, as Church order might permit and mutual convenience arrange. Then, and not till then, would he feel that his Parish was efficiently worked, and he would cherish the hope that what was thus given to him would be repaid in some measure by opportunities of widening experience, and growing in the knowledge alike of man and of God."

The first fruit of this appeal was reaped the same evening; and for the last fourteen years a large part of the time which could be spared from other duties has been devoted to the work sketched in the words above quoted. More than two hundred Clergymen, graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, now sprinkled over all parts of England, have received, at Doncaster and in the Temple, the kind of training here indicated for their ministerial duties. To the active Parochial work which is made prominent in the passage quoted,\* has been added a careful study of the

\* In London, where I have (strictly speaking) no Parish, the kindness of others has enabled me to find practical work for my

Greek Testament, especially of the Epistles ; practice in the reading of the Lessons, the composition of Sermons, and the definite statement of Christian doctrines ; advice, in the form of conversational Lectures, upon some of the special duties of the Ministry ; a general direction of private reading with a view to the examination for Orders ; and that sort of individual assistance in the selection of a Diocese and a Curacy which is perhaps not without its influence upon the comfort and efficiency of the subsequent Clerical life. No one can be so conscious as myself of the many deficiencies of the plan pursued : still I believe that it is an effort in the right direction, and I should be most unthankful if I did not earnestly acknowledge the reaction of happiness which it is sure to bring with it to the person who honestly and diligently seeks to carry it out.

Through the kindness of my former Pupils I have been able to arrange a meeting, the last two

Students in two or three Parishes in the neighbourhood of the Temple, in which former Pupils of mine are now serving as Curates.



years, for a portion of their number, with a view to reviving or strengthening the impressions of their preparation under my charge for the Ministry. Last year those of them who were then serving in the Diocese of York met me, by the invitation of Mr. Glyn, at Beverley—now (I rejoice to say) Vicar of Doncaster: and this year a still larger body, drawn chiefly from the Southern Dioceses, spent three days of great interest and refreshment in a meeting of the same kind at Salisbury. This little Volume, printed at their desire, is designed to keep the record of the latter gathering.

The Bishop of Salisbury most kindly gave us the privilege of holding our morning and evening Services in the private Chapel of his Palace. Our mid-day meetings were held under the roof of his Chaplain, Mr. Yeatman, who is one of us, and to whom we were indebted for all the arrangements which rendered our stay at Salisbury so full of comfort and enjoyment.

I have preserved the exact order of the several Addresses, whether given in the Chapel or at our other meetings. Those which were delivered at

the early Communion will be found extremely short and bare: but their interest, such as it may be, depends, I think, upon their being left unaltered. A still larger allowance must be asked for the two sketches of our readings in the Greek Testament, which have been put together from the notes taken at the time by some of my hearers. They will accept my sincere thanks for that kindness which alone made it possible to preserve any fragments of one of the most characteristic features of our gathering.

THE TEMPLE,

*November 23, 1875.*

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I.

MINISTERIAL SYMPATHY.

ST. JOHN XXI. 3.

*Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.*

THE one thought which this text suggests is that of Companionship in a Work. And it is the thought which I would have present to all our minds, to-night, and in the days which follow.

We will first see it in its bearing upon these disciples.

They were at a very important point in their spiritual history. They were just beginning to believe in the Resurrection. They were just beginning to apprehend the idea of living on in the body, without their Master, and yet not cut

off from His sympathy and from His love. They were being educated into the conception of a spiritual Presence. Like all His dealing with them, this also was marked by a consideration as tender as it was wise. He did not precipitate the lesson He would teach. *As they were able to hear it* was still the rule and measure of His instruction. He did not ascend the moment He rose. He interposed an interval of forty days—during which, though no longer living with them as aforetime, He was from time to time *manifesting Himself*, at once in the identity of His Person, and in the novelty of His life. Thus He would prepare them for that which was to be the rule of the Gospel Dispensation—a bodily absence and a spiritual presence.

On one of these forty days seven of the disciples were together at the sea of Tiberias. The names of five are recorded. There is Simon Peter—with the grand confession first, and then the “base denial,” behind him—the future not yet finally cleared by the express commission, *Feed my sheep*. There is Thomas, once faithless, now

believing. There is Nathanael, *the Israelite without guile*—whose presence gives some probability to the tradition which identifies him with Bartholomew, one of the twelve. There are the two sons of Zebedee—James, the first martyr-Apostle; John, the link between two ages of the Church, and the perpetual witness of *the words which are spirit and life*. These—and two besides, upon whose names it is idle to speculate.

Released now from that attendance upon the footsteps of Jesus which for three years had been their life, they seem to have returned to their old occupation, of fishermen upon this lake; and on this particular day Simon Peter, foremost as ever in speech and action, proposes to go a fishing, and they all resolve to accompany him.

The Church has ever read this Chapter as parable no less than history :—we will do so now.

All we who are here present this evening are not only believers in Christ, as to His Divinity His Incarnation, His Atonement, His Risen Life—we are also all of us His Ministers. He has

Himself consecrated the figure of the text to the work of the Ministry. *Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.* Therefore we read the words before us as typifying our own special life's work. We are engaged in that "fishing," which is no sport and no pastime, but the most serious and severe toil which can task the energies of body and soul and spirit in each man who intelligently and devoutly takes it in hand. In this arduous enterprise we are companions:—and I shall just try to set before you the two things—the enterprise, and the companionship. A very few words will suffice.

(1) Notice, then, that the object set before us as Christ's Ministers is nothing less than the capture of living men for Him. What we want is, to bring to Christ, to God through Christ, not a part of the man, but the whole man. Some men speak of the salvation of souls as the Gospel work. Rightly interpreted, this is equivalent to the other. When the "soul" is read as the "life," the "I myself," the person, the being,—the will and affections, conscience and reason, intellect and energies, all in one



—and when “salvation” means the bringing back of the whole man, from his fall and from his ruin and from his dispersion, into that state of balance and equipoise of all the parts of him, which is health, moral and spiritual and eternal—then the salvation of the soul is synonymous and coextensive with that catching of the man in the net of the kingdom which is Christ’s own figure; with that *presenting perfect in Christ Jesus*, which is St. Paul’s account of the aim of his labour in *fulfilling the word of God*.

Not without cause do I press upon you this thought. It corrects all that merely sensational and emotional idea of our work, which would make one little fragment of the man, not the whole of him, our aim and our quest. Just as we complain of the sceptic, who insists upon our demonstrating to the intellect by itself the truth of our Gospel, when we claim to take the whole of us, the whole and each part, intellect and conscience and soul, into the investigation of that which professes to be the voice of the Creator to the whole thing created; just as we urge upon the infidel, that the argument

which we offer is cumulative, made up of a thousand considerations, moral as well as intellectual, appealing to all the elements, not to one element, of our complex nature—and that it is rational thus to collect the whole man to decide whether indeed his own God is speaking to him;—even so, in reference to some (so called) Evangelists, we feel that the unity of the being is lost sight of in their representations; that they think all is done when one vibration has been caused in one small string of the instrument—when a single cry of anguish has been wrung from the conscience, or a single expression of confidence has been elicited from the heart—whereas in reality what we are set to do is to bring the whole life and the whole being into captivity to the love of Christ, and to count nothing done till the man himself, rescued and sanctified, is drawn safely out of the waters of this sinful and troublesome world, and laid upon that table of the Lord which is spread by His own mysterious Hand for the everlasting banquet in Heaven.

The effect of this thought will be to give great quietness, and great steadiness, and great thorough-

ness, and great patience, to our ministry. We shall prefer, in all things, the steady, the orderly, the gradual, the progressive, to the showy, the sudden, the loud, and the startling. We shall look more to the end than to the beginning. We shall think what will wear well, and last long, and endure trial. We shall pay immense attention to all that educates, and view with considerable suspicion all that excites. The formation of character, the communication of instruction, in our Schools ; the careful building up, the perpetual fostering, of the spiritual life, in our Churches ; the daily *going before* in all good works, and in all holy living, in our streets and in our homes ;—we shall never consent to put these things second to more exceptional and outlying experiments, whether of Mission, or Prayer Meeting, or Midnight Service. We shall feel that, whatever else we try, the daily regular Ministration, *publicly and from house to house*, must be the sinew and muscle and backbone of our work. We are gone forth to catch men—and little fragments and relics of men, whether of their souls or of their lives, must

never be treated or regarded as the whole of them.

*These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* We can deeply sympathize with men who say, "My people are asleep in their sins; my people are drowsily, languidly listening, Sunday by Sunday, to unrealized truths, and to what might almost deserve the insolent epithet of a 'fairy-tale' Gospel: I must, I must at all hazards, try to awaken them." The question lies not, for me, between a part of the man and the whole man, but between a part of the man and none of him. This death must be quickened into any sort of life. Not because I count this or that experiment perfect, but because I count it better than nothing—therefore I will try it. Till some part of the man is touched, no part can live—I will try this, I will try that, I will try anything."

Well then, do this—but do not boast of it, do not idolize it, do not exaggerate it, do not trust in it—and leave not undone that.

And meanwhile, brethren, set before yourselves this thought—it is all for which I have time this

evening—Christ has made me a fisher of men. I am sent on this errand. I fail, I am useless, I am defeated, so far as there is under my charge one man not caught, not consciously and of free will inside the Gospel net, not set upon preparing himself for the heavenly feast and for the everlasting home.

(2) *We also go with thee.* Yes; in this work, this ministry, of Christ's fishermen, we are all, equally, engaged.

There are great differences amongst us, in ability, in attainment, in natural gifts.

Two of these disciples were unmarked, anonymous men. They were none the worse for that. It is the glory of the Gospel, to have room for more *base* than *noble*, and for more *weak* than *mighty*. And it is no discredit to the ministry, that it includes many very common men—as St. Paul would say, many nonentities, many *things that are not*. Christ perfects His strength, not in strength, but in weakness.

There are differences greater than those. One or two of us may have grown up from childhood

in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They have never seriously fallen away from the grace of their Redemption and their Baptism. Another—and perhaps he represents more of us—has, in nearer or more remote memory, a fall, a sin, a dark passage, a season of lethargy and deadness, or worse ; an entering in not by the door, which is Christ, but *some other way* ; a doubt of the resurrection, like Thomas's ; a denial of the crucified, like Peter's ; something lies (probably) behind most of us, causing fear, causing remorse, causing weakness, in this present. And yet, when one said, *I go a fishing*, we have all answered, for the better or for the worse, *We also go with thee*.

And our gracious Lord, however much we have disregarded or dishonoured Him, looks upon us all as His Ministers, and offers us, if we will have it, the effectual strength of His indwelling Spirit.

And we have come together here, at this time, from so many different scenes and centres of work, to revive an old recollection, to rivet afresh a felt bond of union, and to assist one another in going

forth, stronger and wiser men, to that work and that labour after which comes the long night and the everlasting day.

*We also go with thee.* May this be the heart's desire and prayer of each one of us to-night, to-morrow, and the day following. And let us humbly offer that prayer to Christ Himself, whose comrades, whose fellow-workers, in this enterprise we are.

When St. Paul, after long voyage and shipwreck, was approaching the city of his momentous captivity, it is written that the brethren, hearing of his approach, *went to meet him as far as Appii Forum and The Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.* Yes; even an Apostle was not insensible to the influence of companionship in an enterprise. When he saw those brethren, common humble men, caring enough for the Master and the Master's business to recognize in it a real bond of union with this suffering stranger (as he then was to them) who was coming amongst them as a prisoner, and perhaps a victim, for Christ—he felt then that he was not

alone, not a solitary toiler, but one of a great multitude, a vast countless society, knit into spiritual union, yea (as he himself says), into *one person*, in virtue of an individual faith and a common hope; and for this comfort he felt the duty of giving thanks to God, and he felt the revival within himself of a good hope through grace, making him bold to confess, and strong (if need be) to die for Christ—in whom the whole family, in heaven and on earth, is one.

He had said himself, at an earlier point in his life, writing from Corinth, to these same men, *I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.* That desire was now accomplished—he was *come to them in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.*

May something of that fulness of blessing rest upon our meeting, beloved brethren, at this time! You ask me what particularly is meant by it—to what end, more especially, our endeavours and



prayers during these days are to be directed. I will answer the enquiry in all frankness. First of all, I trust that the mere meeting will be salutary. The mere sight of faces once familiar, the mere grasp of friendly hands, the mere presence of so many workers in one great field, of so many companions in one mighty enterprise which has not time only, but eternity also, for its aim—this, of itself, is invigorating. If this meeting leads any of us to reflect upon the work done, the ministry exercised, since the time when we were engaged together in preparation for it, that will be well. If any one is reminded of days when his idea of the ministry was higher and more sacred than he has found himself able to realize in act; if any one is led, through such reflections, to humble himself before God and pray for better things in the future; even this will be well. Even the thought of absent ones—some busy in work that cannot be interrupted, yet perhaps present with us in the spirit at this hour—others recruiting in distant travel energies much overstrained in weeks and months past in their Master's service—one, at least, very dear to many of us,

watching at this time by the bedside of a dying sister, and asking us who are here to remember him specially in our prayers—this, too, is good for us. Nor will it be for nothing that we take counsel together, both here and in our meetings, as to the causes of failure and faintness, of discouragement and disappointment, in the past, and as to such means of progress and improvement, whether personal or ministerial, as the longer or happier experience of some may be able to suggest in aid of the flagging hopes or bewildered steps of others.

Even amongst us there may probably be differences of feeling and opinion, however great the preponderance of general sympathy. We have sought to leave room for these—and we would invite one another to the largest possible exercise of charity. Some may be desirous of opportunities of privacy and seclusion, as a help towards personal edification—may even wish to make this meeting something of what is now commonly understood by the term “Retreat;” and, if it be so, we trust that the daily Morning Service in St. Edmund’s Church,

and the daily Afternoon Service in the Cathedral, followed by a little season, there or elsewhere, of private devotion, may furnish these with those additional helps which they thirst for, without interfering with that free and serious communion with their friends and brother-ministers, in reference to their work inward and outward, which we all, I think, feel to be an advantage not lightly to be esteemed, and largely opened to us by a gathering like the present.

We meet together, not for silence chiefly, but for communion. We can trust one another to take care that our conversation be grave, not frivolous—that last would indeed be unprofitable, and worse. We shall talk together, I know, *not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time*—"buying up the opportunity"—that is, as men who have a purpose in life, and are met here to ensue it. Let us talk of such things as may help, not hinder, seriousness—remembering also that some eyes must of necessity be observers, some ears must of necessity be auditors, of our demeanour and of our conversation, both at the table and in our other meetings. Let

*us give no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed.*

It may be that some of you may have special practical difficulties, in your work or in your life, upon which you might desire sympathy or counsel. Any such questions, written down and communicated beforehand, shall have due attention given to them in our meetings—and, if necessary, without the mention of a name—so far as time will allow, and the subjects may be found suitable.

*In all things charity*—be this our motto. Let no differences mar our brotherly concord. Rather let those differences themselves show us how large is the Church, how capacious is the Ministry of Jesus Christ, if there be but one faith, one hope, one God and Father of all. We bid you to pray, with us and for us all, that it may please Him, in whose hand are all hearts, to pour out His blessing upon His servants, younger and older, who are here assembled at His footstool—that it may please Him to give wisdom to those who offer counsel, docility to them that hear, a spirit of grace and supplication to each and all—so that

this may be, to all alike, a season of spiritual refreshing, from which we may return, strengthened and edified, to our several places of labour, being all, more than ever, *of one heart and one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## II.

### MINISTERIAL DISCOURAGEMENTS.

ST. JOHN XXI. 3.

*And that night they caught nothing.*

How merciful is God's Word—not least in this—that it records failures as well as successes, defeats as well as victories! *That night they caught nothing* has its counterpart in such words as these, written of the Son of God Himself below: *He could there do no mighty work. He marvelled because of their unbelief. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day! How often would I have gathered thy children together—and ye would not!*

So then, failure is no proof of a disowned or Christless Ministry. There is a faith triumphant

in failure, which is better than any self-gratulation on visible results.

We are to bring to Christ's Table this morning humble and penitent hearts. We will lay ourselves low before Him in the retrospect (thus far) of our work. Yes; I shall carry all with me if I speak on these words, *That night they caught nothing.*

What has come of these months and years spent in our Parishes? What fruit have we gathered? What number of persons do we know of, who have been even impressed, even improved, even benefited—how much more, changed, transformed, rescued—by our preaching, or by our influence, or by our example? If the Gospel is indeed of God—if the promise is true, *I am with you alway*—if this Church of England is a real branch of the Church Universal—if we ourselves are ordained Ministers of Christ, carrying the everlasting Gospel which is for the healing of the nations—ought we not to expect results? Ought we not to feel, to bewail, to accuse ourselves on account of, this constant experience, *Who hath believed, who hath found life in, our report?*

And while we know that from the beginning, even when Paul was the preacher, it has been the case that *some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not*, still it is a bad sign when men can comfort themselves easily under this disappointment—when they find it any satisfaction to say, “I have done my duty, I cannot control consequences,” and do not rather weep soul’s tears over that perpetual defeat and frustration of effort, knowing that a disregarded Pastor is (in other words) an erring and straying, a hungering and thirsting flock.

*That night they caught nothing.* The parable of this text seems to be, Jesus was not with them. When He appeared, all was changed.

May there not be something of this in our failures? We have not the hold that we ought to have upon the Gospel itself—that is, upon the revelation of Christ, as the Saviour of sinners, the one Atonement, the Risen Life, the ever-living and ever-present Friend and Helper and Comforter in the person of the Holy Spirit. It may be that we have not leaned all our weight, as men



first, then as Ministers, upon this truth, this fact, this Divine personal Lord. It may be that we have grown slack or faint in that search and that sight of Him, without which of course we are weak, of course we are nothing. It may be that we have looked off a little, this week or this year, from that which was once our trust and our hope. We may have been caught by some of those counterfeits of faith and worship which are so rife in this wilful and restless age. We may have departed a little from *the simplicity that is in Christ*—indulging ourselves with speculations or with studies which have shaken the stability, disturbed the balance, of our spiritual life, and left us vacillating and oscillating between two “views” and two opinions. It may be that we have allowed some worldly or selfish interest to draw us aside from the unity of life and purpose, without which we must be *unstable in all our ways*. It may be—for all possibilities must be taken in—that some old *root of bitterness*, never quite eradicated, has sprung up in us and germinated anew, so that our whole Ministry is being tainted and poisoned

by a half-conscious hypocrisy which "does" not even while it "says."

There is no doubt that much good work is spoiled—and it ought to be—by our inability to say plainly, "I have heard Christ myself, and know." If we could honestly say, "I was once undecided and unhappy; I was once tied and bound by a sin; but I tried upon myself this Gospel which I preach to you—I determined to pray as if Christ were true, and to throw myself upon the Holy Spirit's help as if it were real; and I found peace, I found grace, I found strength for resisting sin, and now I speak that which I know, and testify that I have seen"—this sort of argument would have weight: like truth herself, it is mighty, and will prevail. For lack of it we go forth to our work, and we come back empty—yea, we toil all the night, and take nothing.

I believe that these are among the real causes of our failure—and that, if our Lord should be pleased to work powerfully in some of us this week to feel and to grapple with them, we shall have reason to bless Him for ever for the search-

ings of heart by which He prepares us alike for peace and strength.

*That night they caught nothing.* He was not with them. They had not yet learned the secret of His Risen Life. They knew not yet that the bodily absence is the Spiritual Presence, and that they who have faith to see the Invisible and to grasp the Divine, are by that sight and by that contact made strong for conflict with all the powers of evil—yea, as it is written, *more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*

### III.

#### NOTES OF GREEK TESTAMENT READING.

##### 2 TIMOTHY II. 1—13.

1. Σὺ οὖν, τέκνον μου, ἐνδυναμοῦ ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

τέκνον μου] Timothy was converted by St. Paul's own ministry (1 Tim. i. 2 ; 2 Tim. i. 2, 13), probably in the first visit to Derbe and Lystra, Acts xiv. 6 ; for he was already a μαθητής in xvi. 1. There is such a thing as a new and spiritual relationship between man and man : in the course of his ministry a Clergyman should have many such "children."

ἐνδυναμοῦ] We all want δύναμις—a breath upsets us. The tense expresses a gradual, progressive, continuous "envelopment in strength." We must

be always looking up for it. Where is it to be found? Not in books, not from one another, but ἐν τῇ χάριτι, in the great χάρις, the free spontaneous favour, which is the announcement of the Gospel. And where is this χάρις? It is "in," within, inside, "Christ Jesus." St. Paul's whole doctrine, whole life, is here. The χάρις is not loose or vague; not here, there, or anywhere—it is definite: Christ contains it.

2. Καὶ ἃ ἤκουσας παρ' ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἑτέρους διδάξαι.

ἤκουσας] "didst hear," when I first taught thee the Gospel. We ought to have a definite Gospel to communicate, in the strength of which the new life is to be lived.

διὰ] might be "among" (as in 2 Cor. ii. 4): but it is more—"by means of"—suggesting the actual aid given by the μάρτυρες, who were not merely "spectators" (in the loose sense of "witnesses") of Timothy's instruction, but definite independent "witnesses" to the truth of the thing taught. So in Heb. xii. 1, where the νέφος μαρτύρων is often misunderstood.

παράθου] “lay up with,” deposit in the hands of. Observe the twofold παραθήκη of these Epistles to Timothy: (1) that which the disciple deposits in the hands of Christ (2 Tim. i. 12; compare 1 Pet. iv. 19); (2) that which Christ deposits in the hands of the disciple (1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 14). The latter is the thought here. The παραθήκη of the Gospel is to be handed on. And that, by oral transmission. The Gospel was not first a book—it was a voice: then God supplements, steadies, corrects, by a Book of books. The Clergyman is not only to carry a book, he is to be a voice. Ἐγὼ φωνή (John i. 23). “Pastors and teachers” are a Pentecostal gift (Eph. iv. 11); the men themselves, as such. We are a link in the long chain: “life and doctrine” must be μάρτυρες. The Bible informs, but does not supersede, the personal μαρτυρία.

3. Συγκακοπάθησον ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

συγκακοπάθησον] The right reading (not σὺ οὖν κακοπάθησον). For Timothy, it was a charge to bear “sufferings” with St. Paul and others. For us, “hardness” is the more suitable idea: not to be

luxurious or effeminate, but be willing to live a plain, simple, and hardy life.

4-6. Οὐδείς στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, ἵνα τῷ στρατολογήσαντι ἁρέσῃ. ἔαν δὲ καὶ ἀθλῇ τις, οὐ στεφανοῦνται ἔαν μὴ νόμίμως ἀθλήσῃ. τὸν κοπιῶντα γεωργὸν δεῖ πρῶτον τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν.

Three examples; and one point taken in each. (1) The minister a *soldier*. The point selected (out of many) in the soldier's life is its *devotion*; the singleness of its regard to the will of the commander, its readiness to go hither or thither on the instant at his order, and its consequent necessary disentanglement from the *πραγματεῖαι* of life. We Clergymen are soldiers. We must "give ourselves wholly" to the work of our calling. Even Church business may be an entanglement, with its Committees, charities, &c. As much as may be, let others "serve tables:" "prayer and the ministry of the Word" are our business.

(2) The minister an *athlete*. Special point—*regularity*; the most minute and punctual attention to the exact νόμος of the contest. The στέφανος will

be forfeited, if the running has not been strictly νομίμως. We must be exact, regular, accurate (compare Eph. v. 15, ἀκριβῶς περιπατεῖτε) in following Christ's rule. There must be no "little" departures from duty, personal or ministerial; no slight or careless performance of offices; no trifling with small indulgences, &c. Some of us need the caution against a sort of slipshod living.

(3) The minister a *husbandman*. "It is the toiling husbandman (not the idler) who must be (deserves and is sure to be) the first to partake of the harvest." Special point of this third comparison is *diligence*. How often do we incur a just reproach on this score! An idle Clergyman ought to be at least as impossible as an idle lawyer or doctor in fullest practice.

7. Νόει δ' λέγω· δώσει γάρ σοι ὁ Κύριος σύνεσιν ἐν πᾶσιν.

νόει] Not "consider," but "understand," apprehend, take into your mind. There is more in "what I say" than meets the ear. A spiritual understanding is needed. And I can bid you understand—"for" (not "and" A. V.) &c.



δώσει] Not δώῃ. The comforting thought is, that Christ *will* give. We must *pray* for spiritual intelligence. In the multitude of counsellors and commentators we are apt to forget this.

8—10. Μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐγηγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυείδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου· ἐν ᾧ κακοπαθῶ μέχρι δεσμῶν ὡς κακοῦργος· ἀλλὰ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται. διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ὑπομένω διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ σωτηρίας τύχωσιν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ μετὰ δόξης αἰωνίου.

μνημόνευε] “Have ever printed in your remembrance” (Ordination of Priests). The Resurrection is to be the animating and stimulating thought. (1) It set the seal of God to every word and work of Christ. A dead man cannot raise himself: a dead impostor, who has always appealed to resurrection as his proof, will not be raised by God. (2) It gave Christ back to be the living Lord of the Church. (3) If He rose, we rose (Col. iii. 1): sin is done with (Rom. vi. 7): our life is in heaven. Everything turns upon our perpetual remembrance of the Resurrection.

ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυείδ] Seems out of place at first; but it is to remind us of (1) the true Humanity, (2) the true Messiahship, fulfilling prophecy.

11-13. Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· εἰ γὰρ συναπεθάνομεν, καὶ συνζήσομεν· εἰ ὑπομένομεν, καὶ συμβασιλεύσομεν· εἰ ἀρνησόμεθα, καὶ ἐκεῖνος ἀρνήσεται ἡμᾶς· εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει, ἀρνήσασθαι γὰρ ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται.

ὁ λόγος] “The word which we all know.” It is not necessary to suppose a Christian hymn, or any formal quotation. The clauses which follow are primary maxims, more or less stereotyped by frequent repetition.

συναπεθάνομεν] Not “be dead” (A. V.), but “died :” that is, died when Christ died. Union with Christ dates back not only to the individual baptism, but to the resurrection of Christ Himself.

συνζήσομεν] Not hereafter only, but now. Compare Rom. vi. 8, 11.

ὑπομένομεν] Not πάσχομεν. “If we endure,” bear up under suffering, exercise that “patience” which is “subject waiting.”

συμβασιλεύσομεν] Not hereafter only. The reign of Christ is now (1 Cor. xv. 25). That reign we ought to share now. “He hath made us kings” (Rev. i. 6), and we must not be slaves or cowards.

ἀρνησόμεθα] To "deny" is to say, or act as if we said, "I do not know the man" (Matt. xxvi. 72).

ἀρνήσεται] "I know you not" (Matt. xxv. 12).  
"I never knew you" (Matt. vii. 23).

οὐ δύναται.] It is an *impossibility* for Christ to "deny Himself;" to say, "I am not that I am."

#### IV.

##### THE CLERGYMAN IN HIS STUDY.

IT is the purpose of our present meeting to interchange thoughts upon some topic closely concerning either our spiritual or our ministerial life. The two are, indeed, so intimately blended together, that what concerns one must concern both. I trust that the subject on which we are to converse now, will be found to answer this description. It is a matter lying somewhat heavily upon the consciences of some of us. We should be thankful for advice upon it. I will say, by way of preface, that I must be understood as not in any sense laying down the law upon matters which admit of a vast variety both of opinion and counsel; but only as offering a few homely practical suggestions for the consideration and examination of others—knowing, by long experience, that they

will be received with the greatest kindness and confidence by those to whom they are addressed, and whom I have ever found so ready to listen to the words, spoken and written, of earnest, affectionate, and loving exhortation.

"The Clergyman's Study" is suggestive of many reflections. It is a sacred place. There he equips himself for ministering. There he reads, meditates, writes, and prays. There he prepares those words of doctrine, of exhortation, of comfort, which are to reveal hearts to themselves in the Congregation, to stir consciences to repentance, to quicken resolutions of self-improvement, to make God and Christ and the way of salvation better known, and to furnish a whole week of his people's lives with its *pabulum* of holy thought and heavenward aspiration.

The Clergyman's Study ought to be (as far as possible) his sanctuary. He should regard it himself, he should make his household regard it, with something of reverence. One spot in it will be his oratory. Here stands his desk of toil, there his seat of counsel, there his chair of brief repose between two severe exercises of ministry. Those

who enter this Study ought to come on business. Concerns of the soul ought to predominate. Loungers, tattlers, jesters, ought here to feel themselves out of place.

From these general terms we must turn now to a few particulars. And I must narrow my subject, lest I leave it all vague. Thus I shall pass by two most important uses of the Study, as requiring separate treatment; I might even say, as being almost too private and too personal for even this friendly discussion. I speak of the Clergyman's prayers, and of the Clergyman's counsels. It is, indeed, chiefly by the first of these that he has any ministry in him at all. One minute of prayer is worth a day of labour. The Clergyman's "timetable" is self-condemned, if it shows hour after hour assigned to ministerial duty, and no spaces left for spiritual recruiting. To pray is to work.

The other aspect of the Study, not now to be dwelt upon, is that of the consultation-room. Most Clergymen, whatever their Church views, find themselves compelled sometimes to receive confessions. In other words, they are the natural referees in

cases of conscience; and cannot, if they would, evade the necessity of ministering privately to spiritual disease. It may be in the form of difficulties in believing. It may be in the form of perplexities in acting. It may be in the form of distresses about sin—the forgiveness of the past, or strength against the present. In some form or other, the Study must sometimes be a Confessional; and one of the most anxious, most trying, most exhausting parts of the Clergyman's day is given of necessity to this office. Another element is thus added to the sanctity of the Study—another reason for engraving legibly and indelibly upon its threshold, "Holiness to the Lord."

But now I am to confine your thoughts to one topic, large enough, and too large, for this occasion—that of the Clergyman in his Study, at work, and alone. Minds are perplexed—it is no exaggeration to say that consciences are burdened, about this particular use of the Study. I find young Clergymen troubled about their reading. They complain of want of time for it. They complain scarcely less of want of direction; they know not what to

read, when they have the time. Nor is this true, I can testify, only of the young.

What is suggested on such a subject must be plain and homely.

One chief difficulty is as to reading the Bible. We all feel that the Bible must be read, if we are to be qualified for any ministry. But then arises the question, How? And while we are looking about us for an answer, the time is gone—we must go forth again, fit or unfit, to visit the sick, or to teach in the School, or to preach the Sermon.

One slight help may be found in a resolute division of our Scripture reading into three kinds and methods.

Let me suggest that we keep our devotional study of the Bible altogether distinct from the critical study on the one hand, and from the ministerial study on the other.

We find our devotional reading sadly marred and neutralized by the perpetual intrusion, even when we are upon our knees, of the thought, "Would not this verse make a good text?" A sweet and comforting breath of the Holy Spirit



upon our own soul is thus corrupted into a sort of appliance and convenience for ministering: and thus the Clergyman, who doubly wants the feeding and watering of his own soul, has but half the chance of other people for getting it. It is well, I think, when we are trying to get personal good from the Bible, to repel, almost as a temptation, the inclination to that sort of side-look, of which I have spoken, to its possible use for texts and Sermons.

It may not suit all tastes or all judgments—but is it not quite allowable, for our devotional reading, to be somewhat eclectic in our study—to turn rather to the Psalms (and not all of them), or to special Chapters of the Gospels and Epistles, rather than to make a point of going straight through all Books and all Chapters in a strictly systematic order? For my own part, I count it no irreverence and no superstition even to open the Book by chance and at random, to practise a sort of sacred lottery in the reading, and to see what may fall first under the eye as a sort of oracle of guidance—a sort of Providential hint for the soul's edifying and for the discipline of the life for that day.

Having, thus or otherwise, secured a fragment of spiritual food, a drop of spiritual water, from the Book of books for myself, I would next devote a certain time each day to the study of the Bible for understanding and doctrine. And here I would be as systematic as I was before desultory. A few verses, following upon those of yesterday, preceding those of to-morrow, should be minutely, microscopically examined, with Dictionary and Concordance; then their sense gathered by close pondering; at last (not at first) illustrated by note and comment of others; then a few memoranda made, in interleaved copy or note-book—and thus the work of that morning, however short in time or small in quantity, added to the stock of knowledge—in other words, to that store of appropriated and individualized Divinity, out of which you are to take, in future, alike your devotional portion for yourself, and your ministerial portion for your people. We cannot know, till we have made our own, by critical study, the particular Gospel or Epistle as a whole, what it has in it either of edification or doctrine—whether for the soul's use

in private devotion, or for the Church's use in public preaching.

There will follow, then, third in order, the use of the Bible textually for Sermons. It is a deeply responsible charge, that of selecting the verse or the clause, upon which is to be thrown the whole weight, for that week, of a Congregation's profiting. How earnest ought we to be, to throw aside, and to tread underfoot, all that silly vanity which bids us, in this way as in so many other ways, to preach ourselves—which would have us ask, Can I display my ingenuity, can I bring out my learning, can I startle, impress, or please, by taking for my text this unexpected phrase, that obscure or buried saying, of the Bible—when I see, all the time, that, handled as alone I can handle it, it presents nothing which could stir a conscience, instruct a soul, or affect a life? How straightforward should we be in our pursuit of edifying! not necessarily refusing a deeper or less obvious passage of Scripture, if we feel it to contain, read as we read it, some useful lesson, or some solemn warning, or some striking appeal—not binding ourselves to one stereotyped formula of

doctrine, to be brought out in each Sermon, for fear lest perhaps we should be guilty of stifling the very Gospel itself of salvation; but still, jealous of affecting novelty, jealous of wrapping up truth in too many folds of fancy or subtlety, jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy, lest we either waste the time of souls, or retard their practical progress, through Christ, by the Spirit, unto the Father.

We are bound to place first, and first by a long interval, the reading (in all its forms) of that one Book which is the Clergyman's text-book and storehouse. But the operation of conscience, in this department, does not and ought not to stop with the Bible. Upon every Deacon and every Priest, of all those ordained by our Bishops, is laid the solemn injunction, interpreted into something beyond St. Paul's intention—*Till I come, give attendance to reading*. I could sometimes wish that the general charge were individualized and brought home. In the interval, indeed, between the two Ordinations, it is tolerably clear that the "reading" may well satisfy itself with Examination subjects—of which the second study,

where such it is, may easily be made the more thorough and the more profitable.

It is after the Ordination of the young Priest that the question of reading begins to press most heavily upon the conscience. If he is a man of modesty and good sense, he takes a slighting estimate of his own existing acquirements. He looks forward to a life-long ministry—and he asks himself, What store is provided for such a campaign? How shall I get through ten years, thirty years, fifty years, of this perpetual giving out, without an equal assiduity in taking in?

This enquiry is reasonable, and there ought to be somewhere an answer to it.

There are, no doubt, cases in which reading is a physical impossibility. There are Parishes so vast, that the very sick-list alone precludes everything but out-door labour. When to this hindrance you have added two others—feeble health, and an unintellectual mind—you will see how large a deduction must be made from the reading possibilities of the English Ministry. It makes us regret more bitterly the haste, the precipitancy,

with which many men have rushed into Holy Orders—without time, without effort, without direction, for reading. And yet, here also, we must be cold-hearted judges, if we do not take into account a thousand impediments, domestic, financial, and personal, which have lain in the way of that sort of preparation which it is so easy to put upon paper, and so difficult to work out in life.

We must take the Church as it is—the Ministry, as well as the people—and adapt our counsels rather to fact than to theory.

I can never consent to that view of reading—except it be the devotional reading of Holy Scripture—which should represent it as the absolute condition, or the decisive criterion, of an acceptable Ministry. I have known men whose reading restricted itself practically to the Bible and the *Times*, and who yet, by the help of these two, and by the help also of an attentive eye, a shrewd observation, and a natural originality, were among the most effective and the most honourable representatives of our Church in their neighbourhood and in their generation. But a man must be an

able man to do this: and even he would be none the worse—he would have been very much the better, for a little book-learning, and a little converse with great minds of the past and of the present.

For most men—making due allowances, leaving a certain margin for impossibilities and inaptitudes—the charge to *give attendance to reading* is one which ought to lie upon the conscience, and which cannot be set aside without injury.

What I complain of is this—that, while a thousand voices echo the charge to read, not one is clear and intelligible in answer to the question, What shall I read?

Young men, young Clergymen, are very tractable: but they do want direction. Many of them—it is no reproach—are men of average intellect, little originality, scant education: they feel, what we have all felt in our time, How I wish I were still at School—with my day's lesson set me, and my master's voice calling me up by my name to construe it! I believe that even a counterfeit of that voice would be welcome. I have sometimes

ventured to think that, if a Bishop, or if a Clerical Meeting, or if a Ruridecanal Chapter, would suggest, year by year, a list of four or six books, new and old, for the young Priests of the Diocese or the district to master—however commonplace, however obvious, those books might be, however little superior—I will say, however inferior—they might be to other books which might have been named and were not—still this enormous gain would attend the recommendation, that there would be an end of that idle looking about us, of that most profitless of all questions, What is the right book? what is the best book? when in reality there are thousands of right books, thousands of bests, and when the true benefit sought lies even more in the act of reading than in the particular thing read.

So deeply do I feel the last word spoken, that I would even go so far as to say, Be not over-anxious even as to the sacred, the directly religious, character of the book to which you apply yourself. If you are in close converse day by day with the Bible—if you are in direct communion day by day



with your God—then, for the purpose (no slight one) of stirring the stagnant waters of idea and intellect, of correcting faults of style, suggesting beauties of expression, giving force to your language and pungency to your writing, do not disdain the great masters of English literature—do not count as *common or unclean* the Shakspeares and Miltons, the Bacons and Clarendons, the Burkes and Macaulays, of poetry, of oratory, of philosophy, of history. Your Sermons will be the better for your acquaintance with one page of one of these—provided always, let us say it again and again, that the Bible be the suggester of your doctrine, and the Holy Ghost the inspirer of your exhortation.

There are certain great foundation books, moreover, of our own English Theology, which ought never to be far off from your desk and from your chair. They are worth everything to us, as witnesses to the solidity, to the reasonableness, to the authority, of *the faith once delivered*. Such books—I utter a truism in naming them—as Butler's Analogy, Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, and Davison's

Discourses on Prophecy, are full of strength, full of wisdom, full of comfort, for these times, and would be found invaluable, by thousands who despise them unread, as substitutes for much of the so-called Church Literature of the day, with its insolent comments on Bishops, and its exaggerations of dress and posture into realities of the first magnitude.

I have sometimes thought of suggesting, to men desirous of direction, yet limited in their time for reading, the very simple expedient of an annual subscription of one guinea to Clark's Theological Library; furnishing them with four Volumes, each year, of tolerable translations of the best works of the German Evangelical School of Divines—full of learning, full of piety—large indeed in their intellectual range, yet (so far as I have observed) firm in their hold upon the essentials of the Faith.\*

\* I will add a very humble list of books, some of which were mentioned in the course of the discussion which followed the reading of this Paper. They are given without any systematic arrangement. I have not included those which are the ordinary subjects of Examinations for Orders.

Hey's Lectures in Divinity. Book IV.  
Shedd's History of Christian Doctrine.

But there must be multitudes of men, I hope and I believe it, whose capabilities of reading go

Westcott's Introduction to the Study of the Gospels.

Westcott's Gospel of the Resurrection.

Lightfoot's Epistles of St. Paul—Galatians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

Lange's Commentaries on the first three Gospels, and Acts.

Delitzsch on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Maurice's Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament.

Perowne on the Book of Psalms.

Pusey on the Minor Prophets.

Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul.

Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.

Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church.

Dorner's Doctrine of the Person of Christ. Division I.

Luthardt's Fundamental Truths of Christianity.

Martensen's Christian Dogmatics.

Müller on the Christian Doctrine of Sin.

Fuller's History of the English Church.

Neander's Church History, Vol. I.

Milman's History of Latin Christianity.

Farrar's Life of Christ.

Ellicott's Historical Lectures on the Life of Our Lord.

De Pressensé's *Jesus Christ*—His Times, Life, and Work.

Drew's Reasons for Faith.

Liddon's Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord.

Robertson's Sermons.

Arnold's Sermons, Vols. IV. and V.

De Pressensé's Mystery of Suffering.

Baldwin Brown's Exodus and Pilgrimage of the Soul.

Trench on the Parables and Miracles.

Trench's New Testament Synonyms.

much beyond this ; whose own fault it is if they have not three or four mornings in every week at their service for self-culture and self-improvement. A little more method, a little more judgment, a little more self-denial in the simple matter of early rising, would largely add to their hours of study, and at the same time brace rather than relax the muscle and sinew of their Pastoral Ministry. The mere anxiety to redeem time for study, if it be not allowed to introduce a tone of hurry and reluctance into other and more absolutely necessary work, would give a purposelike and an earnest and a self-controlled spirit to the ministerial occupations of the afternoon, and thus react, beneficially, not injuriously, upon all departments of labour.

Edward Irving's Collected Works, Vol. I.

George Herbert's Country Parson.

Archdeacon Bather's Charges on various Ministerial Duties.

Archdeacon Evans's Bishopric of Souls.

Life of Henry Venn.

Life of Henry Martyn.

Stanley's Life of Arnold.

Life of Bishop Cotton.

Life of Bishop Patteson.

Records of the Ministry of the Rev. E. T. M. Phillipps, of  
Hathern.

To advise such men as to their subjects of study would be a difficult and almost presumptuous task. They will probably feel that it is a point of duty to keep themselves abreast of the contemporary history and of the current literature of their day. Even for preaching this is desirable. A well-informed man in these respects will preach the better, because the more interestingly and appropriately to the particular hearers and to the generation of to-day. In society, so far as he mixes in it, it is always a reproach, and therefore a loss of influence, to be justly called "behindhand." Nevertheless, I cannot but think that no man need be a dreary preacher or a dull companion, who is an earnest student of anything. It would be an advantage to the Church if every man had his subject, in which he was more particularly at home, and upon which he was able to give information, at first hand, to any enquirer. The knowledge of any one science, the knowledge of any one period of history, of any one branch of literature, I had almost said of any one Author—such knowledge, I mean, as is acquired by living

in the one or living with the other—becomes, of itself, an attraction and an influence—in proportion, of course, to the modesty and good sense with which the knowledge is handled and utilized in communication. I could wish, for example, that a young Clergyman, with a population not too large to leave him some leisure for study—instead of trying to acquire a smattering of all Anglican or of all Patristic Theology—which must involve a dangerous reliance upon that culling and coddling process by which partisans of one school or another turn to the account of their own “views” the testimony of an honoured or a primitive antiquity—would take some one Father of the Church, read him, for himself, in the original, “get him up” as he would have done a Classical Author for the Schools at Oxford, and become so thoroughly imbued with the language, the doctrine, the thought, of that one light of Christendom, as to be an intelligent and authoritative corrector, when others misinterpret, misread, misquote him.

One of ourselves—a dear and honoured member of our own body, whose Clerical duty was com-

paratively light—has been enabled, in this way, to complete a *Life of Chrysostom*, founded upon the personal study of the whole of his voluminous writings. It is a book highly spoken of by its critics, and one which promises other achievements in the same field of theological literature. The example may possibly be followed by some other toilers in the Study, not deserting for it any more pressing or more sacred ministerial duty.

Some Clergymen are taunted with a dangerous ignorance of the prevailing tendencies of the day towards scepticism and unbelief. They are accused of living in a fool's Paradise of old-fashioned ideas and prejudices, while the foundations of all faith and all religion are being sapped and mined beneath them. It is a matter of anxiety with many of us to know how far we are bound, in faithfulness to our people and to ourselves, to read books whose name is legion, and each one of which is a libel upon our Christianity, in order that we may be duly equipped to confront the sceptic in the shops, the counting-houses, and the libraries, of our Parish.

The question is one, for some of us, not so much of serving others as of saving ourselves. Some minds are terribly distressed, perilously shaken, by suggestions of doubting. They cannot recover from the shock of reading page after page, volume after volume, of writers who calmly set aside the Divinity of our Lord or the credibility of the Gospel, and whose whole idea and conception of the soul's life is in direct and absolute variance with that of the Church and the Christian. They go back from such reading or such conversation to their Bible, to their Sermon, to their prayers, to their visiting, with a miserable misgiving as to whether, indeed, there be such a thing as truth in one word of that whole system in which they have been brought up, and to the maintenance of which their professional life is now given. Sad instances have occurred of men so utterly shipwrecked by these *evil communications* as to renounce their Holy Orders, and seek for themselves some indifferent, if not antagonistic, position to that which they once seriously and devoutly chose for their own.

I am persuaded that there are men who have



neither the head nor the soul for this kind of reading. They are unused to the difficult task of weighing and pondering. They are in the habit of swallowing, not of digesting. They cannot bear to read with suspicion, and they have not the faculty of reading with judgment. The last thing read is their opinion for the present. Their Sermon of next Sunday will be just the residuum of their this week's reading. They are High Churchmen one year, and half Dissenters another, according as the Book Society or the Rector's table has brought round to their notice this volume or that. Such a habit of mind is indeed fatal to profiting. And where the time for reading is scanty, as well as the intellectual power small, who can blame the man who gives the time he has, and the power he has, to salutary rather than noxious study.

A man is not to be blamed for not holding everything always as an open question. If the Gospel be true, it is not an opinion, but a life: when a man has once resolved to live this particular life, and to die this particular death, he is not to rise each morning to reopen and to resettle it. It

is no reproach to his honesty, or to his candour, or to his intelligence, if he says at last to the infidel writer or infidel arguer, "I have taken Christ for my Master, and I am no more justified in enquiring each day whether He is an enthusiast or whether He is an impostor, than a servant is bound to listen to every libel upon his employer, or a child to admit, instead of resenting, a reflection upon his father's honour or his father's character." But then you see how great a demand this makes upon us, first, to have a reason for the faith that is in us, and secondly, to be really living that spiritual life which is the daily proof and evidence of Christ's Gospel.

Also let the man who knows that he knows nothing about the so-called philosophy or the so-called theology of the day, beware how he speaks as though he knew all. Let a modest silence, especially from words of censure and condemnation, be the tribute he pays to a subject which is out of his reach. Even learned men, even well-informed men, even doubters and unbelievers, can respect the humble, the guarded, the devout utter-

ance of one who loves the truth as he sees it, and speaks out of a full heart the thing which he has learned by prayer and watching. One positive is worth ten thousand negatives: if a man has what St. John calls *the witness in himself*—if he finds the Gospel of Jesus Christ sweet to his soul and powerful in his life—he need not be *afraid of any evil tidings* from the quarter of an audacious guessing or of a self-satisfied wisdom. Such a man is not obliged to skulk or cower or hide himself, because he has not read the book which has undermined the faith of half his generation. He knows God by a higher intuition than can be darkened or blinded by any objections or by any contradictions. What he reads of these does not stagger him: he can read all, and yet hold fast the truth: if he does not read all, it is not because he is frightened to do so, but because he has something better to do and something more edifying to tell. Let us make our own, by living up to it, the faith we hold—and it shall be a growing and deepening conviction, over which neither difficulty nor doubt shall have a disturbing power.

There is one kind of reading, which has a special attraction for Clergymen, and that is, the department of published Sermons. It is a most important element of our clerical training, if there be seriousness, and if there be judgment, in its use. As a rule, I incline to think, Sermons of modern date will be found more helpful, in reference to preaching, than the more ponderous and stately homilies of the third or the sixth generation behind us. The idea of a Sermon has changed, within the recollection of some of us. I will not say, wholly for the better, but still decisively and beyond reversal. The best preachers of the last quarter of a century, of whatever party—I might say, of whatever denomination; for in this matter we may learn from those who widely dissent from us—will be the best resource for men who would earnestly improve their own Sermons, not by borrowing from any quarter, but by getting good from all. I would only suggest that the Sermons of other men should be used rather for sowing than for reaping—rather as general fertilizers than as immediate prompters; that we rarely preach at once upon a text or a sub-

ject got from another ; that, if urgent need compels this, we should resolutely close the book before we enter upon the writing ; and in all things remember that God expects of us the use of our own gift, not the substitution for it of another's higher and better.

I will venture to add one word, which I feel to be comforting, to those of my young brethren who may have been inclined to reproach themselves but too bitterly for the deficiencies of their reading. If you observe, if you think, if you pray, you have *the root of the matter* in you for ministering. Reading has its perils, has its selfishnesses, has its vanities, has its sins. It is possible to make an idol of the Study : and the man who does this will find it growing upon him till he can scarcely dislodge himself at the call of a dangerous sickness or of a dying soul. *Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that.* The energetic young man, whose boyhood and youth were signalized by athletic prowess, but who has given himself with a whole heart now to the higher ministry of the soul, will naturally be more at home in the Cottage than in the Study, in the

shepherding of souls than in the storing of knowledge. Let him not be unhappy, or angry with himself, on this account. *God hath received him.* In the ministry of this great Church there is room for all powers and for all capacities: like the great net of the kingdom, it *gathers of every kind.* Be faithful, be diligent, deny yourself—and the Church will find a work for you—if not here, then there.

It would be suitable to add a brief appendix upon the Clergyman writing. But the utmost limit of space and time is reached, and I must conclude. I would have pictured to you, had it been otherwise, something of that weighty and responsible work, which is the preparation of a word of exhortation and doctrine to be the soul's food of the fifties or the hundreds whom God shall bring together next Sunday to listen. O, how anxiously does the man of God address himself to this task—with what earnest prayer, that God, who has all hearts in His hand, and turneth them whithersoever He will, may move and guide and enable his! With what care does

he select his subject—(1) searching diligently the appointed Scriptures of the coming Sunday, Lessons Epistle, Gospel, to see if any word there written speaks with special force and appropriateness ; (2) marking carefully the Church Season, that he may not disregard the wise principle of presenting the Gospel (which is all fact and truth) in its pieces and portions, so that each one shall have its place and its turn ; (3) noticing observantly the events and circumstances of his Parish and audience, so that he may speak not only that which is true always, but that which is now interesting ; (4) taking account, also, of his own spiritual experience, of the thoughts which God has lately put in his heart, and the passages which have lately struck him in his reading—as knowing that that which comes fresh and warm from the heart of the minister will ever come true and lively to the hearts of the people. And then, as he plans, and as he frames into writing, the subject thus chosen, how does he set before himself in imagination the scene which will be before him when he opens his mouth to teach ! How does he try each thought and each sentence

by its applicability to that audience! How does he ask himself, at the turning of each page, "Will this, can this, interest? Does it interest me, the writer? Does it come warm from my heart? Does it stir my soul, does it provoke my tear, does it arouse my conscience, does it quicken my love, as I write it? If my people heard my voice, if they did everything that I bid them, if they felt every feeling which my words suggest to them, would they be profited, would they be changed, would they be saved?"

Thus he tries and judges his writing, as in the view of consciences, as in the sight of God. With him it is no composition of an essay, it is no exhibition of power, it is no discharge of a duty; it is the exercise of a ministry, it is the utterance of a message, it is the cry of a Voice. When he has done the writing, he takes it as a poor, worthless, lifeless heap of paper, and he spreads it before the living and the life-giving God. *Breathe Thou into it, O Holy Spirit! Come from the four winds, O Breath of God! and breathe upon this dead thing, that it may live!*



Such is the writing, and such will be the preaching. We must not look to-day beyond the four walls of the Study; or we should see this dead thing laid another day upon the altar of the Church, with new prayers for grace, with many a stifled sob and many a forced-back tear, so spoken as that it should seem alive—God bearing it witness, and consciences echoing to its truth. “The Clergyman in his Study” is now “the Clergyman in his Church”—God with him in both—God *putting a word in his mouth*, God *confirming the word with signs following*.

V.

MINISTERIAL ENCOURAGEMENTS.

ST. JOHN XXI. 6.

*Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.*

JESUS speaks. Not yet known. A stranger stands on the shore. It is the voice of friendly sympathy alone—the voice of an elder, taking interest in the success of these “toilers of the sea”—*Children, have ye any meat?* And yet there is in that voice so much of authority and direction and love, that they instinctively obey when it adds, *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.*

And when they have done this, when they have cast the net under His direction, *they were no longer able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

It was quite natural that this miracle should carry back the thoughts of some of them to an earlier, and make *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, say to his friend, *It is the Lord*.

But there was one significant difference between the miracle of the Life and the miracle of the Resurrection. Then *their net brake*. Now, *for all the fish were so many, yet was not the net broken*. The one was a type of those poor, tentative, trial missions, which alone these men had been capable of in the days of their ignorance and their earthliness while as yet they *knew Christ only after the flesh*. The other is a type of the *works greater even than His own* (as He Himself called them) of which they should be made capable when the Holy Ghost was come upon them, and when now the Gospel of the kingdom should be preached to all nations.

Perhaps, too, we may see in the one—the miraculous draught with the breaking nets—the specimen of such successes as alone the Gospel fisherman may have in this life. In the other, the foretaste of the grand crowning success which the Church of

the Risen Lord shall celebrate with songs of praise at the last day.

Our thought this morning was the discouragements—to-night it is, the encouragements—of the Christian Ministry. Now, as then, we can but glean a grape or two from the overflowing vintage.

(1) And first we must place the assurance that there is a directing Voice and a guiding Hand. The disciples did not yet know the Voice—and we do not always discern it. For Christ speaks in many tones: all true tones are His. There is the voice of circumstance—that is His. There is an opening here, not there—that is of Him. There is the voice of character—and that is His. It suits me, it is natural to me, to do or to say this thing, this word, not that. Another would act and speak differently; but Christ has many rights and many bests. There is the voice of influence—and that is His. This person is brought nigh to me—there is a drawing of the heart between us—I can say this to him which I could not to another. So it is all through.

But the great, the vital point is, that Christ

is the Director, and Christ is the Lord. Hearing Him, sent by Him—under Him, from Him, for Him—that is our strength. *Without me ye can do nothing.*

O, how often shall I press upon you, dear friends, the thought of your commission? It is such a relief, such a comfort, such a power, to know that Christ has a Ministry below, and that we are in it. Look up to Him, in each cloudy and dark day, in each dull and monotonous day, in each day when the sun shines and earth smiles and life dances and sparkles, and say to Him, *On which side, Lord?* I am a child, I am a fool—guide thou me!

.(2) It is no play upon words when we go on to say, that there is a right and a wrong side of the ship for the casting of the Gospel net.

When Christ says, *the right side*, we must not choose the left.

It is true in all kinds of ministering. There is an awkward, clumsy, inappropriate way of offering truth and love to men, as well as a way which is suitable, winning—to use the figure before

us, "adroit," "dexterous," and therefore Christ's way.

How human ought we to be in our application of the Divine!

Is there a house which joy hath lighted up, which sorrow hath darkened? Is there rejoicing, in this home, over *a man born into the world?* Is there lamentation in this, where a man *mourneth for his mother?* O, be there—ye holy and humble men of heart—with your blessed sympathizing Gospel, which is, in other words, *Emmanuel, God with us*, in this life which is all His, in this life so gloomy in itself, in this life so bright if read in the light of heaven! Such occurrences of the human being are to the true Pastor Christ's voice saying, *Cast the net on the right side, and ye shall find.*

But even the Pulpit, as well as the Parish, has its right and its left side—its right and its wrong. O, how unhandy, how grotesque, how "gauche," may the Gospel itself be on the lips of the preacher! Is there not indeed, in the public ministry, a casting on the right side? Here, too, I make much of the

charge, *Be human*. O, dip the precious morsel in the wine of sympathy, of self-knowledge, of love! Give not out the blessed mystery, of things seen by Christ in heaven and by Him brought out thence to be the life of the world—"dispense" not this wonderful, this unspeakable gift, in dry generalities, in theological subtleties, as though you were casting a morsel to a dog who could not be hurt—yet even your dog may be hurt—by the indifference or by the discourtesy. No, no—make it your own first! Feel it, love it, live it, find it nutritious, find it salutary, find it living and life-giving to you, and then, as such, dispense, present, minister it. Let nothing come from you crude or repellent. Recollect, it is for their life—and that it may be so, it must be your life first.

(3) The third point is, See that what you cast, in this human, this sympathetic manner, be *the net*, the Gospel net—the net of the kingdom, of God, of heaven.

There may be a casting—and (in a sense on the right side, and yet it may be neither hither) nor thither as to the great end.

A Prophet speaks—and the saying is familiarized to us in *The Christian Year*—of those who *sacrifice to their own net*. And so may we have a net of our own, and take great pains with it in making and mending, and think highly of it as an instrument of catching, and even fancy that it has caught, because (perhaps) there is attendance and there is attention, there is even a *thronging and pressing* to hear, and because men praise and applaud the thing heard, and we pass for diligent, earnest, even eloquent preachers—and lo, there is nothing in the net—what God calls nothing!

Or the net may be in a different sense human and not Divine. There is a strong feeling now in favour of naturalness. Men are weary of doctrine. What doctrine there is in modern Sermons must be dressed up, or toned down, or in some way adapted and modified, so as to get rid, as far as possible, of the supernatural and the mystical. There must be everything to please the ear, and to gratify the intellect, and to touch the feeling, and to make religion sensible, and to give the impression of a Divine love which I might almost call a Divine



*good nature*—and as little as possible of a distinct and distinctive Christianity, as little as possible of *Thus saith the Lord*, or of *This have I seen in heaven*. It is to be feared that the net thus cast, however wide its sweep, however judicious its direction, may be found to have enclosed nothing—nothing of the real, the everlasting being—when Christ stands in the last day upon the shore, and says, *Bring that which ye have caught*.

The great elements of the Gospel Revelation must find place in all teaching. We must never consent to eliminate these, because they are unattractive, because they are even distasteful, to our hearers. The sober realities, of our fallen state, of our deep ingrained corruption, of our need of a Sacrifice for sin, of a Divine Saviour, of a Holy indwelling Spirit, of a true sanctification of heart and life, in order that we may be meet for the everlasting inheritance of the saints in light—these things, not rawly or roughly flung out, not baldly or stiffly enunciated, but tenderly and sweetly and feelingly impressed—these, I say, must never be left out or thrown behind in comparison with topics of

the day, or judicious comments on passing events, however easy it may be to command attention to these, however reluctant may be the natural heart to give heed to those.

The net thrown must be the Gospel net—for it is only in the character of Gospel fishers that we have any right to stand up in these Pulpits before our brethren to claim their hearing in the name of God.

(4) The text has one word more. *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.*

Surely it is a promise. A promise to us. To the youngest and the least gifted of all of us. Under Christ's direction—casting the true net—casting on the right side—ye shall surely find.

He says not, All at once—nor, all you would—nor, so as to see it now. Mysterious as it must be, that Christ's seed should be sown, and fall upon four kinds of ground, only one of which is receptive—mysterious as it must be that Christ should have all power in heaven and in earth, and yet there should be evil, and abounding evil, and powerful evil, not only in the world around, but in the

Church itself which is His body—still such is the fact, and there is no hope held out to us that it will be otherwise while time is time and earth earth.

Prophecy—the latest Book of all in the Bible—the last Inspiration of Christ to His Churches—seems rather to prepare us for an intensification and exasperation of the hostile powers leading up, working up, to the revelation of the Great Day. *The way of the kings of the East* is even to be prepared by the drying up of the intercepting Euphrates, on purpose to gather the forces the more effectively and the more encouragingly to the battle in which they are to meet their doom. We are not to look for gradual ameliorations of nature and human life till earth shall brighten naturally and beautifully into a sort of Millennial heaven. Christ does not say, Ye shall turn night into day, sin into holiness, or men into Angels, in this present.

But He says, *Ye shall find*—and He puts no limit to our hope and to our prayer. If not all, and not all at once, and not all visibly—yet some-

thing—something real, something always, something at last, and for ever. Not one earnest Sermon falls quite to the ground. It bears some fruit. Some conscience is quickened, or some sorrow is comforted, or some thought is suggested, or some difficulty is smoothed, or some life is guided. It is something, if it be not everything, that the preaching of the Sunday, in these twenty thousand Parishes of England, keeps up the average of practice and principle, prevents God from being altogether forgotten, keeps Christ in view as the Redeemer and the Saviour, reprints the *programme* of which St. Paul speaks to the Galatians, rekindles the lighthouse candles which keep many a storm-tossed life off the rocks and shoals of infidelity, and witnesses for truth and holiness in a manner salutary where it is not saving.

But O, more than this, and far more! We cannot read hearts—and it is well. Ill were it for us ministers if we could follow our words into all the secret places of thought and feeling. When a glimpse is ever given us of the effects of our preaching, we almost start as we say to ourselves,

Then they took me at my word—they understood me to be in earnest, and they recognized the voice of God in me.

If sometimes too much cast down, we might sometimes be too much elated. Wheresoever Christ is preached, there is something *found*. Some one receives the testimony. Some one passes from death unto life. Some one is lifted out of the mire of sense, off the dust-heap of vanity, and transferred into the living kingdom of the beloved Son. At last, when it is no longer dangerous for flesh and blood, there shall be a revelation, an unveiling, of the secrets of grace. Minister and people shall meet before the throne, and for others besides the Apostles shall those words of blessed anticipation be verified—

*What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy.*

## VI.

### MINISTERIAL RECREATIONS.

#### ST. JOHN XXI. 12.

*Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.*

IT is a morning scene. The note of time is distinct. The revised reading (γινομένης for γενομένης) of the fourth verse, *When morning was now coming*, adds a striking touch to the picture. *Come and dine*, as the Greek indeed shows, is a summons to the first meal of the day, to the actual breaking of the night's fast.

We have dwelt already upon the evening start—upon the night's failure—and upon the direction, of love and power, which guided the weary fishers to a supernatural draught.

We must not enlarge upon the deeply in-

structive particulars which lie between these and the text itself. How the eye of love detects the Person in the love—*The disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.* He had outrun him to the sepulchre—now he anticipates him in the sight. But as Peter was the first to explore the sepulchre, so he is the first to swim to the shore. Peter has that upon his heart which will not wait. He girds his fisher's coat to him, and casts himself into the sea.

A marvellous scene awaits them. They find a fire already made—and upon it (as the Greek seems to imply) a single fish, and then also a single loaf, in preparation for a more than sacramental meal. The command to *bring of the fish now caught* will suggest to some minds a beautiful thought—how Christ, the Lord of the Feast, vouchsafes to make it a Communion, not only in reference to the guests one with another, but also in reference to Himself and them : it pleases Him, not only to give, but even to receive ; to receive, indeed, of His own (for what else have they to offer Him ?), but still to receive ; even as it is written in the last Book

of the Bible, *I will come in to him, and will sup with him*, as well as *he with me*. Guest and Host—such is the characteristic condescension of Jesus Christ.

This done, *He saith unto them, Come and dine*.

I have a few words to speak to you this morning upon "Ministerial Recreations," in that true sense of the word in which it means a refreshing and recruiting of the whole man with a view to the more efficient resumption of labour. The text seems to say to us, We Ministers serve a gracious Master, and He has regard not only to our work but also our resting. He has some special solaces for us, over and above those which He provides for His people. So sacred is our calling, in every part and in every aspect, that we may speak of these things amongst one another, even in this sacred place, quite plainly, quite naturally, and without reserve.

The Sunday evening of the Clergyman is a thought by itself. The day, which for others is



restful, has been for him laborious. Not an hour has been quite his own—all has been service and ministry—and now the evening is come. Is there not a brightness quite peculiar in that hour of closing day? How delightful, whether in his home, or with a beloved friend and comrade, to gather up *the fragments that remain* after those busy hours of holy toil. How like some of those simple yet graphic narratives in the Gospels, of days of incessant toil, in teaching and healing and feeding others, followed by an evening of holy resting, on lake or mountain or in some temporary home, during the earthly Ministry of our Lord Himself! Who else, who that is not of us, can quite enter into the charm of that resting? How earnest should we be to guard against the excess of that reaction from work to repose; to take heed to ourselves, lest we suffer a spirit of idle jesting or frivolous merriment to enter in and mar the holy cheerfulness which ought to involve no violent jar or discord either with the preceding sacred toil or the following sacred devotion.

Very sweet, again, when we regard them as

Christ's gifts to His ministers, are those opportunities of intercourse one with another, which are so largely multiplied in this generation, and which we, in one of the purest and happiest forms, are at this time enjoying. No men have so much to say and to hear, in meeting with members of their own Profession, as have we. Others are rivals, more or less, in their career of business : we are all one—one person (as St. Paul tells us) *in Christ Jesus*. How great is the blessing of mutual converse upon the things of God ! How large the advantage of exchanging thought upon the duties and upon the interests of a life twice blessed and twice devoted !

These, indeed, are in a sense, outward refreshments—very real, but second to the highest. Let us think for a moment of the invitation of Christ to His ministers to refresh themselves apart with Him.

What prayers can be quite so comforting as those which are (so to say) of one piece with the work—those which, instead of being stolen from, or forced in amongst, other employments, are in fullest accord and harmony with the studies, and

with the pursuits, and with the aspirations of the life—those which look forward to, and look back upon, a day, and a succession of days, of which God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are at once the subject and the object? To come back at evening to the Master for whom we have been at work all the day—to confide to Him our record of efforts in His service, to ask His forgiveness for the self and for the sin which is mixed up with the best of them, to receive once again out of His inexhaustible love the assurance of absolution and the renewed promise of help—how blessed! And if we feel that prayer is not this to us—if we are conscious that work and heart are not at one in us—that the world is too much with us—that old sins are still strong, and new temptations alluring—that consequently there is no special comfort in the thought of the ministry, but rather a perpetual misgiving and mistrust from which almost any other profession might have been free—still, brethren, let us say once again to ourselves, My ministry is at least a touchstone of my spirit—a memento, if I will make it so, of wants, defects,

and faults, which it is better for me to take account of; and there is One above, not watching for my fall, but waiting to bless—not suffering me to sleep (as some) the sleep of death, but awakening me, by my very calling, to newness of life.

We will add to these examples but one more—the most obvious of all, and the most appropriate. When the Risen Lord says to us, as this morning, *Come and eat at my table*, has He not a peculiar blessing for His ministering servants?

There are parts and portions of our public duty, which bring with them no small trial and hindrance to some of us. The mere fact of ministering—of saying the Prayers, and reading the Lessons, and preaching the Sermons, in which we stand in the sight of men, with other eyes upon us, and with a whole Congregation dependent (in some sort) upon our utterances—is a terrible snare to the self-conscious, and we know that real self-forgetfulness is as much a gift as a duty. It is the struggle of a life, for some of us, to be able at all, under these conditions, to pray with humility and to speak from the heart.

How gracious, then, that one ordinance, which is both in itself singularly simple, and also full of opportunities for absolute silence and entire self-concentration! In the administration of the Lord's Supper—and most of all, for all but the one celebrant—there is a quietness, there is a stillness, there is a solemnity, favourable to enjoyment: we Ministers can in that one Service be (as much as is right) alone with our Lord—can listen for His voice in the secret of the soul, can commune with Him unnoticed and undistracted, and when He says to us those three little words, *Come and dine*, we can answer out of a full and resolved heart, Lord, I want Thee more than they all—Lord, satisfy me from Thy fulness, and fit me for a more devout and a more devoted service.

## VII.

### NOTES OF GREEK TESTAMENT READING.

#### 2 TIMOTHY II. 14—26.

14. Ταῦτα ὑπομίμνησκε, διαμαρτυρόμενος ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ μὴ  
λογομαχεῖν, ἐπ' οὐδὲν χρήσιμον, ἐπὶ καταστροφῇ τῶν ἀκουόντων.

ταῦτα] Specially the great maxims of the three verses preceding.

ὑπομίμνησκε] Addressed to Timothy, as the ordainer of others. The lesson following is primarily for ministers.

μὴ λογομαχεῖν] How much of λογομαχία is there in our modern controversies! If we would look within the words, we should find, if not union, yet less of discord, than we imagine. (Illustrate the remark by reference to Sacramental contro-

versies, on "Regeneration" and the "Real Presence.")

χρήσιμον] Always ask yourself in everything (e.g. in preparing a Sermon), *Is this useful?* If it were ever so much attended to, would it *profit?* If it is not for the οἰκοδομή, it must be for the καταστροφὴ of the hearer.

15. Σπούδαςον σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ Θεῷ, ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον, ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας.

σπούδαςον] The tense expresses *one act* of earnestness, decisive and never receded from.

παραστήσαι] Properly, *to place beside*, or *in the presence of*, for service (Rom. vi. 19) or sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1). We are to place ourselves in God's presence, by a resolute and repeated act of self-devotion, saying, *Here am I: Lord, use me.*

δόκιμον] *Approvable*; one whom God can accept, because He sees in him that spirit which alone can do His work.

ἐργάτην] "A worker," not a drone. *Which am I?*

ὀρθοτομοῦντα] Whether the figure is that of ploughing or of road-making, in either case the point is the straightness. There must be no

waving or crooked lines, no unsteadiness in the hand, no ambiguity in the direction. So with our Gospel. We must "cut it straight." Our teaching must be direct, purposelike, straightforward. We must have a clear conception of "the Word of truth," and we must make it plain to our people what it is that they have to believe and to do so as to please God. This rule strikes at the very root of all vanity and self-display in ministering. (These last Epistles are particularly earnest. Heresy was beginning to distort and pervert the Gospel. Its growth and spread was rapid, and St. Paul is most particular in his warnings to his disciple and successor to preserve the true aim and the just proportion and "analogy" of the Faith.)

16-18. Τὰς δὲ βεβήλους κενοφωνίας περιῖστασο· ἐπὶ πλεῖον γὰρ προκόψουσιν ἀσεβείας· καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτῶν ὡς γάγγραινα νομὴν ἔξει· ὧν ἐστὶν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Φίλητος, οἵτινες περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἡστόχησαν, λέγοντες ἀνάστασιν ἤδη γεγονέναι, καὶ ἀνατρέπουσιν τὴν τινῶν πίστιν.

In divine things *κενοφωνίαι* are always *βέβηλοι*, and soon run into positive *ἀσέβεια*.

*περιῖστασο*] *Give them a wide berth* (as Lucian says of the mad dog and the philosopher).



ἡστόχησαν] The figure is that of a number of persons standing “round” the truth, all aiming at it, and all “missing” it.

λέγοντες] The particular error is that of spiritualizing the resurrection. It is an offshoot of that professed disdain of the body, which branches into asceticism on the one hand, and sensuality on the other. Some said, The body is your enemy—punish, maltreat it. Others said, The body is nothing—it will fall off at death—meanwhile, do what you will with it. The Gospel says, The body is one half of the man—glorify God in it (1 Cor. vi. 20). St. Paul had a poor opinion of asceticism pure and simple as a remedy against license (Col. ii. 23 ; where the *πρός* means *to meet, correct, remedy* the *πλησμονή* of the flesh). This same hyper-spiritualism, while it still repeats itself in the form of a mistrust of a real resurrection, has led one body of Christians to disparage and disuse the two Sacraments, as though Christ could not possibly have intended to dignify the body into a handmaid of the soul ; whereas the Sacraments are meant to be both a solemn memento of the unity of the whole

man in his two constituent parts, and also a perpetual witness to the reality of the future resurrection.

19. Ὁ μέντοι στερεὸς θεμέλιος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔστηκεν, ἔχων τὴν σφραγίδα ταύτην· Ἔγνων Κύριος τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ, καὶ Ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου.

ὁ μέντοι] The place of the article requires the rendering, *Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth*. The idea is, that God has laid a firm foundation-stone as the basis of His great house or temple, and that this stone is (1) stable and steadfast (ἔστηκεν), not shifting or precarious; (2) sealed with His seal of authentication, which in this case takes the form of two inscribed mottos (as the twelve θεμέλιοι of the city wall, in Rev. xxi. 14, bear "the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.") In the choice of one (if not both) of the sayings there is a reference to Numbers xvi. "The Lord will show who are His" (LXX. ἔγνω ὁ Θεὸς τοῦς ὄντας αὐτοῦ). . . "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men." The two together give the two sides of the Christian standing—the secret, and the open. The one is the appropriating love; the other, the evidencing life.

The one is the secret safety; the other is the visible holiness.

20, 21. Ἐν μεγάλῃ δὲ οἰκίᾳ οὐκ ἔστιν μόνον σκεύη χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ξύλινα καὶ ὀστράκινα, καὶ ἃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν ἃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν. ἐὰν οὖν τις ἐκκαθάρῃ ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τούτων, ἔσται σκεῦος εἰς τιμὴν, ἡγιασμένον, εὐχρηστον τῷ δεσπότῃ, εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἡτοιμασμένον.

The great house contains all varieties of vessels and implements of use and service, from the golden drinking cup to the meanest kitchen platter. We are all inside Christ's house. We are all "vessels." We may be more or less gifted or privileged; more or less consistent or faithful. But inside Christ's house we all are, who have been brought into it by baptism. We may be rusted, defiled, disused vessels. We read in Scripture of "a vessel wherein is no pleasure;" but *σκεύη* of some sort we all are. No one should be allowed to doubt his place and right as a Christian, made so, not by his free will, but by God's "preventing" act. And St. Paul here teaches that we may pass, if we will, from the meanest, most degraded position in the house to the highest and most honourable. We are Christians, though we may want a great change.

And the capacity of that change lies in our being already inside the house. How shall we reach the "gold" stage? By realizing our standing, and rising to it.

ἐκκαθάρῃ] The tense says, *shall have succeeded in thoroughly cleansing himself.*

τούτων] Those follies and falsehoods, those antichristian doctrines and practices, which have been noticed above.

εὐχρηστον τῷ δεσπότῃ] *Useful to the owner.* A grand ambition! An ambition open to all—specially to the minister.

22. Τὰς δὲ νεωτερικὰς ἐπιθυμίας φεῦγε· δίωκε δὲ δικαιοσύνην, πίστιν, ἀγάπην, εἰρήνην, μετὰ τῶν ἐπικαλουμένων τὸν Κύριον ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας.

What the Christian minister is to avoid, and what to pursue.

νεωτερικὰς] Those of the ordinary worldly young man.

φεῦγε] *Be always fleeing from.* Lusts and passions are not to be escaped in a moment. They will be always pursuing you. (No aorists *here.*)

δίωκε] The figure is that of a perpetual chase.

These graces are (as it were) in full flight from us : they can never be caught—they must continually be pursued. This is the Christian life-struggle. The man who thinks he has caught these graces is a Pharisee at once. (Observe the frequent use of διώκειν in Scripture in this connection. Rom. xii. 13, xiv. 19 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 1 ; 1 Thess. v. 15 ; 1 Tim. vi. 11 ; Heb. xii. 14 ; 1 Pet. iii. 11.)

ἐπικαλουμένων] The Christian life is here described as *a continual calling in of Christ*, or of God through Him, for help, comfort, grace, strength, &c. A simple and sufficient definition. This is the difference between a Christian and another man.

23-26. Τὰς δὲ μωρὰς καὶ ἀπαιδεύτους ζητήσεις παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς ὅτι γεννώσιν μάχας· δοῦλον δὲ Κυρίου οὐ δεῖ μάχεσθαι, ἀλλὰ ἡπιον εἶναι πρὸς πάντας, διδακτικόν, ἀνεξίκακον, ἐν πραύτητι παιδεύοντα τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους, μή ποτε δόξη αὐτοῖς ὁ Θεὸς μετάνοιαν εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας, καὶ ἀνανήψωσιν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου παγίδος, ἐζωγρημένοι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἐκείνου θέλημα.

μωρὰς καὶ ἀπαιδεύτους] *Silly and uneducated.* How many ζητήσεις of this day deserve no better name ! Questions of dress and posture and position—an “educated” man should be above them.

But, besides this, St. Paul adds that controversy is itself an evil.

οὐ δεῖ μάχεσθαι] *Never quarrel.* As a rule, keep out of controversy. It has spoilt many good men. It can scarcely be necessary for any of *us*. Our business is to *teach*, to *educate*, to *discipline* (παιδεύοντα) even *opponents* amongst our people. And that, ἐν πραΰτητι. Not as laying down the law to them (κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων), but in the desire to benefit and to help (2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Pet. v. 3).

μή ποτε] *If haply.* From the *interrogative* use of μή.

δῶη] Not δῶ. The optative suggests, *And may it be so.*

ὁ Θεός] Never forget who *gives* repentance.

ἐπίγνωσιν] That *on-knowledge*, that growing and deepening knowledge, which is more of heart than head.

ἀνανήψωσιν] (The subjunctive, perhaps, expresses *the natural and immediate consequence* of the gift of repentance.) The word denotes a recovery, not from sleep, but from drunkenness.

There is a spiritual as well as a literal intoxication. Both are lying heavily upon our people. Repentance is the coming back to the senses from the stupefying effects of sin. *He came to himself* (Luke xv. 17).

ἐζωγρημένοι] Probably, *having been taken alive* (in the Gospel net) *by him* (the δοῦλος Κυρίου of verse 24) *unto* (in fulfilment of) *His* (God's) *will*. (The interpretation is not certain. The absence of the article favours this rendering; also the ζωγρῶν of Luke v. 10; and the distinction of persons in αὐτοῦ and ἐκείνου is thus preserved. On the other hand, the δοῦλος is some way off; and in Matt. xxvi. 24 αὐτῷ and ἐκεῖνος refer to the same person. But the sense given above is the more striking and beautiful.) We must be either in the devil's "snare" or in Christ's "net": it is the "will" of God that we should be in the latter. In all our efforts, therefore, to induce men to include themselves in the Gospel net, we know that we have on our side that Will which moves the universe.

## VIII.

### THE CLERGYMAN IN HIS PARISH.

THE word "Parish," originally meaning "neighbourhood," has acquired for us a more technical signification. But we must not lose the first idea. Neighbourhood lies at the root of the word still—and it is very unfortunate when either the unwieldy size of the district assigned to one Clergyman falsifies the name, or the Clergyman himself forgets that it is as the neighbour of his people—the equal, the friendly, the Christian, neighbour—that he must seek to realize and (in the true way) to *magnify his office*—not by obliterating, but by emphasizing, that brotherhood with his people which is the foundation of all ministry and of all priesthood.

Still there is a meaning for us here in England



in the word "Parish," which both appropriates and consecrates the appellation. We can speak with propriety of "his Parish," "our Parish," "my Parish," with reference to the ministerial work and charge. We owe this, remember, not to the fact of being Ministers of the Church as such, but to the fact of being Ministers of the Church of England as by law established. If unhappily the present cry for Disestablishment should gain its desired object, there would be an end of the Parish, though there would not be an end of the Ministry. We should thenceforth be no more than persons located here or there to offer our services to such inhabitants of the district as might choose to call us in—we should have lost the right to go here and there as the responsible, legally constituted, spiritual guide and friend, the one man charged with a definite oversight, an undisputed stewardship, in a particular town or village, of which the boundaries are marked and the acres numbered.

I say this, in the hope of checking, so far as my voice may be heard, that somewhat easy and indifferent talk of some Clergymen, which repre-

sents the maintenance of the "Establishment" as a matter of small importance to the position of the Clergy and to the influence of Religion. If Disestablishment comes, it must be borne, like other calamities—and the *Lo, I am with you alway*, will not be destroyed by it: but we can scarcely estimate the difference that it would make to the Ministers of our Communion, to be no longer the constituted Pastors and Teachers of a certain definitely assigned population; to have to feel ourselves the optional, the almost officious, offerers of spiritual services which twenty other denominations have an equal licence to volunteer, instead of being charged with a solemn manifest duty towards these particular hundreds or thousands of living souls.

The remark with which I have opened my subject, leads me to place first in order, though not as foremost in importance, a question which has perplexed many, and which has, for all, a certain kind of difficulty—how the Clergyman ought to conduct himself towards members and Ministers

of Dissenting or Nonconforming bodies in the Parish committed to his charge. There are two modes of treatment which must be earnestly guarded against. The one is the contemptuous or condemnatory—the other is the complaisant or complimentary.

Some young men give themselves the airs of an undoubted and undoubting authority, as towards a race of inferiors and aliens, of intruders and upstarts, who have brought schism into Christ's body and are serving the altar of God with unhallowed fire. They make it a duty and a principle to give no quarter in the war with Dissenters. With the Minister of a Dissenting Chapel they will exchange no courtesies—they will meet him neither in public nor in private—they will make it a sacred duty to deny to him, living and dead, on letter and tombstone, the empty title which has no legal validity for any one, and which has become as much a matter of courtesy as "Mr." or "Esquire." With the members of his Congregation they will enter upon no neutral ground—they will neither speak of the

Gospel nor administer the Sacrament—until they have gone into the whole question of Episcopacy and Unity, and insisted upon an immediate and final rupture with a Communion in which three or five generations of the family may have found happiness in life and repose in death. In this way the breach of centuries is widened and deepened ; and that which might have been an external difference, touching neither piety nor charity, may be made, by the arrogance and intolerance of one hot-headed youth, a real gaping festering wound in the living body of Christ.

On the other hand, there is sometimes a disposition to make light of differences, which is wrong because it is untruthful. A Clergyman is not bound, for the sake of peace, to say to a Dissenting Minister, “The Church is nothing, and Dissent is nothing—let us openly fraternize, let us exchange Pulpits, let us annihilate Creeds and Articles—are we not of one mind and of one speech?” It is surprising that either side should be satisfied with such concord. It destroys the very “reason of existence” alike of Church and

of Dissent. If there is so absolutely nothing between us, that we can exchange Pulpits—in other words, that we can freely teach and preach in each other's Congregations—how is it that together we cannot worship, that together we cannot communicate? If there is difference enough to justify your separation from what you admit to have been the Church of your fathers, surely there is enough to keep you from “climbing up” from behind into her Teacher's Chair, into her Pastor's Pulpit.

“The Clergyman in his Parish” must find a mean between these extremes. In reference to the Ministers of Dissenting Communities, he will maintain a serious and a courteous neutrality. He will never flatter, and he will never attack. He will not make as though nothing were involved in questions of Church government and Church ritual—but neither will he obtrude his opinion upon those whose very profession shows that they differ. He will be glad when on some neutral ground he can act with the other. Such common ground is Christian philanthropy. The promotion of the

social and material good of his people, the management of Infirmaries, of local charities, of special efforts in relief of distress, will furnish abundant opportunities of cordial and mutually beneficial co-operation. I venture to include among these agencies of a common Christianity the advocacy of the Bible Society. Its principle is, the circulation of Bibles without note or comment : consequently, they who would differ seriously in the interpretation of the Bible can join hand in hand in the distribution of it unopened. In Town Parishes there will be also Associations of a perfectly general kind for giving information on secular or semi-secular subjects to the young. It is well that the Parish Priest should neither resign such influences into Nonconformist hands, nor yet endeavour to monopolize them in his own. The principle once laid down—that Dissent is a fact—a fact which we can neither ignore nor alter ; a fact for which the faults of the Church in past days (dare we say, never and nowhere in the present?) are in large part accountable ; but a fact of which we may either aggravate or mitigate the evil, according

as we bring, or fail to bring, to bear upon it, in our own Parishes, a spirit of modesty and a spirit of charity—the details of its application will settle themselves, *and the fruit of righteousness will be sown in peace for them that make peace.*

With reference to private Dissenters the rule is clearer still and easier of application. We are Ministers (at present) of a Parish, not of a Congregation. Therefore none must lie, if we can help it, outside the pale of our sympathy and our service. We must never label or stigmatize our people as being anything else but Churchmen. The cases are comparatively rare, in which any overt act has made this man or that woman a Dissenter. So ignorant are our people generally about such questions—so incapable of giving a reason why they are either this or that—so absolutely uninformed as to the distinguishing or conflicting tenets of Episcopalians, Baptists, Independents, or Wesleyans—that it is really hard and cruel to treat them as if they were deliberate seceders from what we hold to be the more excellent way. Let us treat them as if they were ours till they bid us begone ; let us visit

them in their sickness, their sorrow, their bereavement; and, doing so, let us speak to them of Christ and the soul, not of Episcopacy and not of Dissent; let us give them, if they will have it, the Holy Communion, and leave all minor matters (are they not minor matters?) till that day when, human language and human thought being cleared at last of their ambiguities and of their enigmas, they and we shall "read the mystery right, in the clear sunshine of His smile."

But now we must turn to matters more interesting, though I can scarcely say more "concerning" to many of us.

We have done with the Clergyman as Churchman: let us view him next as Pastor. There are many aspects of his Pastoral life which could not be treated for lack of time. And there are some aspects of it which will be mentioned this evening. At present, I will content myself with a very few practical hints.

Our Saviour Himself places first, in this matter, the care of the young. *Feed my lambs.* There is



no fear of this part of our duty being overlooked in this day. But your experience will tally with mine as to the preeminent importance of this branch of our labour. It is sometimes almost wrong, the tone in which a disappointed pastor will say to you, "I have no hope of the elder—my hope lies in the young." O, there is a Gospel—might we but find it—for the middle-aged, even for the old! But the other is the brighter and the more hopeful. The School—the Catechizing—the Confirmation Class—the young Communicants, held together by sedulous care, by individual seeking and summoning, month by month, so long as there are ten, so long as there is one, to respond—in these things lies our most interesting, our most remunerative toil. And then you will bear in mind how wide are the ramifications of this influence. Never is the Pastor so welcome in the cottage home, as when he carries to the mother tidings of her son—good tidings often—why must we be seen only when we must reprove? Never is the visit so intelligible, so self-explaining, as when it has a definite thing to be said, a definite request to be made, concerning one whose relation-

ship is thus recognized, and whose welfare is thus sought. Nor is this all. From one home to another there is but a step—the door of one home opens (I might almost say in figure) into another—and the report of the Pastor's care and the Pastor's kindness towards this child and this parent, is his sure passport to the acceptance and to the confidence and to the gratitude of that.

Several interesting questions branch out of this.

Much may be done, in reference to the School, by influencing the managers, by teaching the teachers. A good understanding with the Master—the loan of books to a man intelligent, perhaps, but not largely read, and possessing few books of his own—the cultivation of sympathy with one whose position leaves him stranded between a class which he is above and a class which he stands below—a sincere and mutually respectful tone of brotherly intercourse—is a matter of great importance in its reaction upon the School. I venture to urge very strongly a high estimate of the value, and in these days the growing value, of the Sunday School. It is the powerful supplement of—I will

not quite say the effectual substitute for—the Ministerial work of Catechizing. Under another name, it may serve much of the same purpose, in Parishes where the young are so numerous as to make their collection and instruction in Church difficult, unsatisfactory, or even disorderly. The Sunday School must do much of this work—though I earnestly repeat it, not all. The public Catechizing, especially in Village Churches, has a most important office not only towards the young. Many parents and friends of the young can gain almost more by learning thus with and beside their children than (with a very imperfect education) they can gain from Sermons. For the younger and youngest children the Sunday School will be the necessary expedient. And I will not lose the opportunity of impressing strongly upon you the importance of instructing and influencing the voluntary and other School teachers by means of regular, careful, and minute preparation of the Sunday lesson with them in the week preceding.

There are two other points which I must place by themselves.

Is it well to encourage, what is finding favour with many excellent men, the formation of what are called Guilds or Fraternities for our young Communicants? I should wish to elicit suggestions from your own experience upon this subject. I feel, for my own part, a repugnance (but it may be as a matter of taste—it may be for want of knowledge) to the addition of any thing, any pledge, any combination, to that of simple Communion, which seems to me to have in it everything that is true and wholesome and satisfying, and nothing that is either fanciful, or exclusive, or of man's device. If there must be anything else, at least let it be very simple, very Churchlike, very reminiscent of Christ's own Communion and nothing besides.\*

Once more—what ought we to aim at in our

\* In the discussion which followed, the prevalent feeling seemed to be, (1) that Associations of some kind were desirable for the young, as a help to consistency of life, and as a protection against opposition and ridicule; (2) that the name of such an Association should be a simple and unaffected one; (3) that the Rules should be few and plain, and should take the form rather of Recommendations; (4) that some sort of special work, however small or humble, should be found for each member; (5) that the Association should grow naturally out of a School or Confirmation Class, and with as little as possible of publicity or parade.

dealing with the young? Some, we know, would stimulate into instant action and instant expression all the fulness of the saint's life. They count nothing done, till the child, till the boy, till the youth, avows himself converted, calls Jesus his own, sets out afresh, quite consciously, quite by himself or in company only with the like-minded, upon a course full of profession, straight for heaven. I would draw out your experiences upon this point also—only saying, for myself, that we must well remember that we are dealing with a whole man and with a whole life—we must think (to use plain language) what will wear best, what will last longest, what would be the true thing and the wholesome thing for every one—we are not to rear a few exotics—we have got to train, and to educate, and to discipline, and to set in the way for this world and for that—we must look to the end—we must sow for eternity—we must not knowingly cultivate that sort of life which would want perpetual watching, perpetual coddling, to keep it going and to bring it safe home.

Having said these few words, I wait your comments.

And now I will go on to other exercises of the Pastorship.

Let us say a word upon Visiting. Some things are so obvious that it would be a mistake to repeat them.

The immense importance of visiting. The absolute uselessness of a Pastor who does not visit. The self-confessed impotence of a Pastor who excuses himself by inability—in other words, by indisposition. The extraordinary blessing which attends the faithful visitor. The wonderful changes which now and then reward and encourage him. The barrenness of that Pulpit which is the place of display for the student, for the scholar, for the non-visitor. The enormous fertility of that preaching which comes ever fresh and fresh from commerce with struggling dying men.

But to-day it is in my heart to assume all this, and rather to warn you against excess, against feverishness, against exhaustion, in this good work. Each sick-bed, each death-bed, is like the wilderness in which Christ did battle with wild beasts and evil spirits. It is a tremendous undertaking to

approach that chamber. Nothing which is not true, nothing which is not real, nothing which is not heart-deep, can breathe in that atmosphere. It is idle to take out your sick-list, and say, "I will do so many visits this afternoon." I scarcely believe that any young man's soul can do more than two or three such visits in one day. We ought to prepare ourselves anxiously for each one. We ought to recall that which passed there yesterday. Each separate visit ought to leave its mark. Each separate visit demands much—much more than a good intention, a sincere pity, or a commonplace faith. God ought to be with us in it; and that He may be so, He must be sought.

We should point our Sermons this way. When we go up the Pulpit steps, we should say to ourselves, Some day I shall be ministering to these souls separately—ministering in their extremity. This Sermon ought to be addressed to dying men—separately dying men. It ought to have in it the *pabulum* of a hundred lives, the *viaticum* of a hundred deaths. What did I learn yesterday beside that death-bed, as to things then precious

and vile? What did I find to be the vital thing, because the thing that could be died upon? Away with the mere rubbish and refuse, which are neither hither nor thither to souls!

There is another side to our visiting. Our Ordination Service speaks of the whole as well as the sick. In small Parishes it is possible—and if possible, desirable—to tend the entire flock by separate shepherding. Some men have made it a duty to visit each house in their Parish once, twice, or thrice in the year. This is well, if it can be, and if it be well done. But is a severe strain upon the spiritual life. There may be something even in the common call—something conducive to a friendly hearing, to a favourable construction, to a willing acceptance, of the things said in the Pulpit. But there is a danger too—I am not striking the balance—of a general softening and smoothing and palliating of the decisive alternatives of the Gospel; of a suggestion that perhaps the words are stronger than the meaning; of an implied understanding that the severities of the Pulpit are meant for other people, for the lower orders, for great



sinner—not for the respectable householders, not for the “society” of the place. So that we come back to the question, and it is the real one, Can we bear this close contact, this face-to-face inspection, this showing ourselves as we are—or should we do better to confine ourselves to the Pulpit and the sick-room, where at least the words are true, and where the life and the spirit are not put to the test of consistency and of “through and through?” We ought to be able so to visit as to carry the pastoral mind and soul with us. We ought—but are we? Some Clergymen would no doubt do more real work, in the Study, and by the sick-bed, than they can do by a perpetual round of calling, which is all that they can make of this Visitation of the Whole.

One thing I earnestly press—and it is, the most diligent attention to Providential openings. The greatest harm is done—mischief which no preaching can undo—by a neglect of Parishioners suffering under sickness, anxiety, or bereavement. Our flocks are sensitive on this point, quite to unreasonableness : they remember against us, to hoar

hairs and dying days, a little inattention, however involuntary, in some season of trouble—and they draw inferences from it, quite disproportionate, quite unjust, as to the hollowness of many professions and the hypocrisy of many Sermons.

It follows naturally, from the last topic, to speak to you of the Clergyman as a neighbour. I like that thought of the "Parish" as a *παροικία*, a neighbourhood, a society of persons dwelling by the side of each other and of the Clergyman. There must be duties growing out of that dwelling beside. Each home in that locality is something to every other. Most of all is it something to the central home—to the Clergyman's house—which is set there for the very purpose of bringing Christ into that neighbourhood; Christ, not only as the Revealer of a life to come, but also as the Emmanuel, the God with us, of the life that is now. Surely that home ought not to be a mere sign or wonder, a mere lighthouse or beacon, warning us of invisible rocks and shoals, or mementoing to us a judgment and wrath to come: it ought to be that which

Christ Himself was to men in the home and in the workshop of Nazareth, in the marriage-feast at Cana, and in the blessed refuge of the brother and sisters at Bethany—a specimen of a life lived in the world yet above it—of a life bright with immortality, and shedding its radiance upon other homes and other lives around.

It is a question often asked, and never to be hastily, or perhaps conclusively, answered, How much ought a Clergyman to enter into society? There is one answer which is easily given, and which satisfies the spiritual haste and indolence and selfishness of many, Refrain! And there is something in the experience of all persons who would lead a godly life, which responds to that counsel. Who has not come away from a large and promiscuous gathering, from a dinner or an evening party, with a deep consciousness that it has been time wasted, or worse? How natural to draw the inference, For me at least this is an unprofitable thing! Others, better men than I, more devoted, more consistent, may do this thing safely or even with advantage—for me it is perilous, it is

injurious! Yet let us reflect, for a moment, what this says. It says that our religion will not bear touching or handling—that it can live and breathe only in solitude—that for us life is not redeemed, only a way is made out of it into another. It says, too, that Christian men and women—for Christian we must call them, seeing that they are baptized and not excommunicate; seeing that they are worshippers and communicants, living moral lives and cultivating (for what we know) pious thoughts—that these, I say, must be let alone, must be thrown aside, as to a large part of their being, by those who were sent into the world, like them, to be its salt and its light, and who choose, on the contrary, just to keep themselves safe, and to do nothing whatever to purify and to regenerate the neighbourhood to which God has commissioned them.

I know—and what was said before, as to the visiting of the whole, will show that I recognize it as possible—that there are men who find themselves so useless, so unprofitable, so irresistibly light and frivolous, in society, that they must give up the battle as lost, and redeem for other purposes,

of study or devotion, the hours which they cannot turn to account in company. Only they must not lay down the law on this matter to their brethren. It is the experience of many who have not seen their way to this isolation, that, when they have gone into society with an earnest prayer for blessing, they have found, ere the evening closed, some opportunity, which otherwise would have had no existence, for giving and receiving good—it may be, in the privacy which so often waits upon publicity, the unheard discourse with a casual neighbour, whose soul is suddenly opened to one who bears in his face the attribute of “helper”—they have found reason, thus or otherwise, to rejoice that they had not wrapped themselves in the unsociable mantle of a religion all for itself—they have felt that henceforth they must pray more, and trust more, and expect more, and then God will more largely bless—they will reproach themselves, not others, if they are often frustrated and disappointed in such intercourse—they will feel, nevertheless, that neighbourhood is relationship, and that they have no right to call common or

irreligious that interchange of kindliness which God has cleansed.

The Parish is a neighbourhood, and the Minister is a neighbour. It is his business, it is his duty, not to forsake, even in this sense, the assembling of men together. He must raise, he must not lower—he must raise, he must not despair of—the tone of his equals and his fellows in the gatherings of this life. If he cannot—if for his soul's sake he dare not—go into society, let him humble, not pride, himself on this behalf; let him confess himself unspiritual and earthly, and seclude himself (if it must be so) in dust and ashes!

We have barely space for one topic more—the Clergyman in his Parish as an example.

It is an old and a threadbare subject—all our consciences are alive to it. If I dare to press it upon you to-day, it is not because I have ought new to say upon it, but because of its urgent, its incomparable importance. Some of us are still young in the Ministerial Office: they scarcely know, as yet, how common it will have become to them in

ten years or twenty—how natural it is to all of us, when we have walked safely for a while, to begin to walk confidently—how countless, and how unsuspected, are the inlets of danger, to the man whose watch is intermittent—how many influences, at first amiable or useful, reveal themselves, in the long run, in frightful mischief—how gradually, yet how fatally, a little imprudence, a passing indulgence, a silly impulse, may develop itself, in a Clergyman, into a scandal, a misery, a sin—may cost him his position, his Ministry, his character, his soul. *It shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth* may be the description of the consequences to a Congregation, to a Parish, to a Church, of one unguarded moment, one hasty step, one single self-forgetting, of the man whom Christ had commissioned to lead his little army against the ranks of sin and the devil.

These things come not by accident. It were treason to Christ and the Gospel to say so. The man who is watching and praying always—in him Satan *finds nothing*. He may “come,” as He “came” to Jesus the night of His Passion—but

there is present One stronger than the strong one—and the assault fails and is beaten. The fear is for one of us who may have entered this service with a half heart; who may have sought in it occupation, interest, even usefulness, without *giving himself first*, without doing battle with himself first, without first “proving” the armour which he is to bear against the foe. The risk is for one of us, who may have found himself early strong, early successful, early victorious—may have seen *the spirits subject to him*, may have played upon hearts as upon an instrument, may have *kept the vineyards of others*, but neglected, forgot, disdained, to keep his own. The risk is for one of us, who may have suffered one of the myriad darts of modern unbelief to pierce his shield, without troubling himself to bring to issue, on the instant, the question of questions, *Hath God spoken? hath God in these last days spoken to us in His Son?*

The fear, the risk, the peril, is for these—yet God leaves us not without warning, without promise, without hope. We are not deserted, not



abandoned, in our warfare. It is not too late, whatsoever we be, to come back, humbly and earnestly, to the Almighty and All-merciful, saying to Him, day by day, and *believing that we shall receive—*

*Keep me, O Lord, I beseech Thee, with Thy perpetual mercy: and because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall, keep me ever by Thy help from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things profitable to my salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## IX.

### THE PASTORAL OFFICE.\*

#### ISAIAH XL. II.

*He shall feed His flock like a shepherd.*

WE are met together this week to remind ourselves of the great work to which we are pledged as ordained men, and to help and encourage and even counsel one another in the doing of it. To-night we have asked the sympathy and the prayers for us of a wider circle—of a Parish in which one of us ministers—of a Congregation which is a sample and specimen to us of the Universal Church of Christ. It is difficult to imagine a more united Congregation. A large

\* Preached in St. Edmund's Church, Salisbury, on Friday evening, October 1, 1875.

number of us are knit into one, not only by being, as all are, creatures and sinners, fallen and redeemed, baptized and confirmed, members of the Church, partakers of the Spirit, hastening, through a brief day of grace, towards an evening of judgment and immortality—but also on the more intimate footing still, of a like charge and a like office—of the same special duties, difficulties, dangers and encouragements—of a life given to one work, and of one human weakness needing to be enabled out of one Divine strength.

And for the rest—for those who hold not this office—yet are they not one with us, substantially, even here, even in this difference? What is the flock without the Pastor? What shall become of our very Christianity, if it be not nourished and cherished by its ordinance of worship, its ministry of preaching, and its Sacrament of Communion?

Let us speak, then, to-night, and hear, as being all spoken to—not least the speaker; as being all concerned and interested in the matter spoken of; as being all, Ministers and People alike, *one man in Christ Jesus.*

The Ministry has many provinces and many aspects : Christ would have it so. But there is one title which seems most suitable for it to-day, and to that I will confine myself. St. Paul places it last in his enumeration of Christ's Pentecostal gifts to the Church—for it stands naturally last in order of time as well as of dignity. There must be "Apostles" to lay the foundation, and "Prophets" to utter the inspiration, and "Evangelists" to carry Christ where He is not yet named, before there can be "Pastors and Teachers" to tend the flock already portioned out for shepherding.

This ministry, as it is the lowest in rank and the latest in institution, is also, when once established, the largest in its numbers, and the most indispensable in its functions. Whatever else the Church of a particular age or a particular country may lack without being unchurched, it cannot live without this—a local Pastorate to apply and to live the Gospel.

*The Pastoral Office.* Very old, very ordinary, is the title. But, while Apostles, and Prophets, and Evangelists too, however noble or however sacred

their ministry, have that ministry defined for them only by its distinctive work, the Pastor, the Shepherd, of the Church of God below, has a Divine ideal, and a Divine Exemplar. The Old Testament has its Shepherd, and the New Testament has its Shepherd, and each of them is a Person of the Triune Godhead. The 23rd Psalm, and the 10th chapter of St. John, set before us the Pastoral Office of the Father and of the Son. And either Testament exemplifies this Divine Ministry in a human. The 34th chapter of Ezekiel tells of *shepherds of Israel* who ought to *feed the flocks* but who *feed themselves* in the stead of them. And the 20th chapter of the Acts, and the 5th chapter of the first Epistle of St. Peter, authorize the transfer of the same term to Presbyters of the local Congregations. *From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the presbyters of the Church; and when they were come, he said to them, Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops), to feed (shepherd) the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. . . .*

*The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am your fellow-presbyter. Feed (shepherd) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof (acting as its bishops); and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive the amaranthine wreath of glory.*

Having this authority, my brethren, for the application to our office, of the name and of the thing, I will reverently select from the Psalm and from the Gospel, a few of those particulars of the Pastoral Office which may seem to be at once the most distinctive and the most practical. You will understand that it can be only in specimen that I deal with so large a subject.

1. The first point emphasized by our Lord Himself, and by Him expressly applied to the human transcript, is that of the orderly entrance. The pastor must *enter by the door*.

In this requirement we all see two parts.

(1) Christ is the Door, and therefore the human Pastor must enter through Him.

Dear brethren! we feel that there is a spiritual entering upon our work, which no regularity and

no propriety of admission can supersede or replace. The man must enter through Christ, before the Minister can enter through the Church. There must be a devotion before there can be a dedication. The soul must come to Christ before the life can minister to Christ.

The thought is solemn. It may be reproving to some of us. No doubt, this is the cause of many languid, indolent, ineffective ministries. This accounts for that lethargy, that absence of mind, which we complain of in our public readings of prayer and Scripture. This accounts for that dullness and deadness, for that self and self-consciousness, for that vanity and touchiness and thirst for applause, which attends us like a shadow along the aisle and within the rails, and which whispers in our ear, in Pulpit and Study, as though we ourselves *were some great one*, or as though it mattered anything, to preacher or hearer, whether we were great or little. All this betokens a poor and slight hold upon Him who is at once our subject and our object, our "reason of existence" and our realized end.

It may be that some hearts respond to this charge. *Entered not by the door—climbed up some other way*—thought that a general good intention, thought that a moral conscientious life, thought that kindness of heart, liberality of hand, amiability of spirit and temper, might do as well. Let me venture to remind such persons, for their encouragement as well as for their reproof, how many Clergymen in all times, having not begun well (in this respect) have yet ended well; have been led on from morality to faith; have laid afresh the very foundations, far on (it may be) in their ministry—learning, after long teaching, what those words mean, *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, and being not too proud to bend the stiff neck, of self-love, of long habit, and of good repute, to the yoke of a childlike docility, and (if need be) a new idea of the Gospel.

(2) The orderly entrance has another part. The first question of our Ordination Service has respect to the inward call: the second turns to the outward—the “due order” of the commission received through man. And here, brethren, it



would be unprofitable for us to discuss the question, what is the form of Ordination most orderly and most Ecclesiastical. I presuppose your opinion upon this topic. What I urge is, the necessity of each person who seeks Ordination being fully persuaded on this point in his own mind. I cannot conceive a more wretched feeling, in the soul of a Christian Minister, than that which should doubt the validity of his own commission.

*What am I, and what is my father's house—* what am I, in the retrospect of childhood, youth, and manhood—what am I, in the consciousness of this moment, as to my moral stability or my spiritual strength—that I should dare to stand in this Pulpit, and give advice, as of authority, to these men and women who are, all of them, in the sight of God if not of man, my equals in worth, my superiors at least in this—their not setting themselves up to teach?

How dreadful, if we cannot think with confidence of our commission! I am not self-sent. The Church, of which Christ is the Head—the Church, in which the Spirit dwells—the Church, to which the

Ascended Lord gave certain spiritual gifts, amongst them that of Pastors and Teachers, ordained, commissioned, sent me. Not to pretend myself better than these others—rather, to feel myself in all reality last and least; but, to exercise a certain office towards them, as the reader, and the interpreter, and the preacher, of a word not mine but God's—as one of the regular pastors and teachers, whatever my personal insufficiency, of the Church of which Christ is the Head, and of which all we, ministers and people, are alike and equally members.

2. Next to the orderly entrance, personal and official, stands the individual self-devotion.

*The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

The sacrifice of Propitiation is ended; not so the sacrifice of the self-dedication.

There is no good work done upon earth, in any department, without sacrifice.

But in our work it is all in all.

(1) The evasion of sacrifice is easy. A fair show may be made without sacrifice. We can all of us frame to ourselves the idea of a Clerical

life—decorous, energetic, self-complacent, even conspicuous—which yet, if you examine it, consists, from beginning to end, in such efforts and such occupations as are gratifying to flesh and blood, conducive to estimation and power and self-display; while the routine, the monotony, the drudgery, of service—that which Christ calls the shepherding, the bishopric, of souls—is left altogether to the deputy, to the subaltern, to the subordinate.

We sometimes tremble, on this account, for the very activity of the Church of this generation. So much does it run to talk, so much to management, so much to the organization of the Church, so little to the oversight of the Congregation, that it seems almost to merge the Pastor in the Bishop—nay, in that *other people's bishop* (ἄλλοτριεπίσκοπος), that *busybody in other men's matters*, for whom St. Peter had to coin a word—and to forfeit, in the same degree, for the Church of England, that which ought to be, and which has been, the backbone of her strength—a vigorous, an independent, a home-loving and Parish-loving Presbytery.

The good Shepherd, Divine and human, giveth his life for the sheep. His is not a distant or general, it is a minute and a personal attention. He lives for his own flock. Not for the Church as a whole—that is His Master's charge. Not even for the Church of his country—that is the affair of Synods and Bishops. The individual Pastor is devoted to the particular portion and allotment (*κληρος*) which is consigned to him. No young, inexperienced, half-informed novice can possibly relieve him of this charge. The very fact that it is abandoned to him takes away the strength that he might have had for it. To be the loved and trusted colleague, younger in years, in all else recognized as co-ordinate, is one thing: a splendid training for a young Minister—a grand opportunity, full of hope, full of promise. But to have every work, except that of preaching, left to him—to be committed, single-handed, to the oversight and guidance of souls, to the visitation of sick and whole, to the charge of Schools, to the preparation for Confirmation, to the baptizing and the marrying and the burying of the people, as though these matters

were either so easy that they were things of course, or so insignificant as to be beneath the notice of an elderly, a learned, or a dignified man—this is to take all the heart and all the spirit out of the junior, and to make him less than half the man that he might have been with the advice, and still more with the help, and with the sympathy, and with the co-operation, of the superior. It is the hireling, and not the shepherd—the hireling, *whose own the sheep are not*—who *seeth the wolf coming*—the wolf of drunkenness, and the wolf of lust, and the wolf of infidelity, and the wolf of godlessness—and goes his way, to his library or to his club, to his committee-room or his platform—I had almost said, to his Congress or his Convocation—while the wolf may—for him—scatter, or catch, or devour his flock.

We have seen lives so different—lives begun, continued, and ended, on a principle so opposite—without one charm of scenery, or society, or even visible and present success—yet persisted in, from day to day and from year to year, so patiently, so laboriously, so devotedly, even to infirmity and

hoar hairs and death itself—that we feel ourselves to be speaking the possible as well as the ideal thing when we urge ourselves and others to the like perseverance and the like steadfastness—looking for our reward to the far distance and the final crown—the appearing of the chief Shepherd, and the evening call, *Give them their hire.*

Let no one imagine that a life given in this way to a poor or secluded Parish is lost to that cause which I am sure we all have at heart—the defence of our Church as the National, the Established Church of England. We may depend upon it, that each self-denying, self-sacrificing, self-forgetting Parish Priest is doing more to deepen the foundations of the Church itself, where alone they can be securely laid—in the heart of the people—than the ablest, the foremost, the most eloquent champion of that Church in the chief places of public concourse. If the work of the Church were well done in each separate Parish, the position of the Church as an Institution would be unassailed and unassailable.

(2) There is yet another side to the individual

self-devotion of the Pastor; and that is, the preference of ministration (strictly so called) to what is commonly understood as organization. The Pastoral Office of God Himself, as it is described in the 23rd Psalm, is all personal. It is the Office of One who looks after, and who attends to, and who deals with, the separate wanderer, the individual sufferer, the one hungering and thirsting, the one needy and desolate and imperilled and terror-stricken. What a lesson, scarce veiled in parable, is here for the human shepherd! While we are planning how to overspread a population of hundreds or thousands with a perfect net-work of most intricate machinery, the one house in which there is an opening, the one life in which there is a Providence, the one soul in which there is an awakening, is lost in the crowd of numbers, at the very moment when it is singled out by God Himself for effectual ministry.

I dread the hackneyed phrase—used sometimes as the highest recommendation of Parish or Curacy—"Such a man is a splendid organizer." It means too often that the chief minister, in experience as

in office, is sitting at the council-board of planning and scheming, while the terrible struggle between Christ and Satan on the battle-field of some anguish-stricken or dying soul is directed (if at all) by the youngest deacon, or the most ignorant layman, or the feeblest woman, upon whom human chance or Christian compassion has devolved this most arduous, most responsible service. The Pastoral Office is a hand-to-hand, heart-to-heart, soul-to-soul ministration. In its highest exercises, at all events, it is an individual work, alike in the Minister and in the ministered unto. The individual must be first sought and found—then he in turn becomes a new centre of personal light and warmth to other individual lives and souls around him. *He calleth his own sheep by name*—and therefore one by one.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we forget, in so saying, the variety, the manifoldness, of the Spirit's gifts, or would tie every Minister down to one pattern. If "a splendid organizer" is not much, "a powerful inspirer" is a magnificent description. There are men whom health or



capacity or overwhelming pressure preclude from constant personal access to their Parishioners, who yet, by teaching the teachers, by sending the sent, by intense interest in every part of the work, by intense sympathy with every one of the workers, do contrive to be everywhere, and to do everything, not so much by deputy, as in the spirit—their influence is blessed of God, and their Parish is like His own garden, beautiful for planting, and well watered.

3. This last thought will suggest one word upon the character of the more public teaching. One chief feature of the Pastoral Office, as it is described in the Psalm and in the Gospel, is its tenderness. *The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth (or refresheth) my soul. Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over. He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. They know not the voice of strangers.*

All this has a bearing upon the public as well as the private Ministry. Why is it that so much

of our preaching is scantily attended, languidly listened to, wasted in the result? Many answers might be given—let one suffice. There is a want of this voice, not as of strangers, which the people “know” because it is human; the voice which was so remarkably that of the Divine Pastor below, and which is still so characteristic of the Divine Pastor above, as He speaks in those who are after His own heart in His work; the voice which gives reality to each subject touched upon, the reality of experience within, the reality at once of insight and of sympathy towards them that hear. Let us try our Sermons (may I presume to say it?) by this test. Is the tone tender, with that kind of tenderness which is at once genuine and manly? Is this thing which I say, a thing which I have tried upon myself and found useful? Is it spoken now to others, not as if from a throne or a judgment-seat, but as with a brother's voice, known because it knows? I venture to promise an audience, and I venture to promise attention, and I venture to promise many a responsive tear and prayer and effort, to every

Minister, however young, however unlearned, who carries a Pastor's love and a Pastor's yearning into the Pulpit whence he is to feed his flock.

4. There is one last thing that I would draw from the Divine models before me—because I feel that it does stand by itself in importance as well as in pathos—and that is, the Pastoral Office in its companionship of the dying.

It is said of the Divine Shepherd, as the very climax of His Ministry, *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.*

In his own humble way the human Shepherd has to represent the Divine. People who have thought scorn of you in your Church and in your daily round of ministering, expect you at their death-bed. Expect, it may be, too much of you. Expect a miracle. Expect a *viaticum*, a passport, and a safeguard, which lies not with man. Still they recognize that part of your pastoral office which I have called the companionship of the dying. How great, how solemn, how awful an undertaking! To

accompany to the very brink of that dark river a dying man, to whom all is necessarily strange—happy if it be not all repulsive and horrible; to guide the steps of the soul towards that plunge into the invisible; to point out to the alarmed, or (much, much worse) to the stupefied, a way of salvation never sought in life; or, on the other hand—blessed be God, it is sometimes so—to be permitted to go up, hand in hand with a believing and a rejoicing spirit, to the very threshold of the golden gates, and almost to look in after it as it enters—*who is sufficient for these things? What manner of persons ought we to be* always and everywhere—in what an attitude of constant preparedness, shod indeed perpetually with what St. Paul calls *the readiness of the Gospel of peace*—who may be called, at any moment, from Study or drawing-room, to minister thus to a parting soul! What earnestness should we feel, not to be found helplessly silent or shamefully formal in the necessary suggestion of last words, last consolations, last prayers, to the dying! What manner of persons, I repeat it, ought we Pastors to

be—were it but for this cause—in *all holy conversation and godliness!*

With a feeble and trembling hand I have sketched this faint outline of some features of the Pastoral Office: and now, at the close, I fear lest perhaps I should have saddened by my words some heart *which God has not made sad*, when my one thought has been how to set the work before my brethren as not only the highest and most glorious, but also the humblest and the happiest, in which this life can be spent and *that world* waited for. Every thought of God's mercy and goodness and longsuffering, by which we seek to encourage and to reassure the diffident and the self-despairing in the Christian life generally, is at least as available for those who are charged with this particular stewardship. If there be in our calling, as doubtless there is, a peculiar difficulty, risk, and trial, then in the same degree does it receive a peculiar help, guidance, and blessing, from the gracious and merciful One with whom we have to do. Upon that help, that guidance, that blessing, let us cast ourselves day by day with a

more simple and a more earnest affiance. What we need, He knows : nay, if we need an entirely new start and new impulse in His life, the ministerial or the personal, that also He knows, and that also lies within the compass of His power and of His love in Christ.

Finally, if there be one here present, who has been wont to judge harshly or to speak disdainfully of that Pastoral Office which he himself bears not, let me beseech in its behalf a kindlier eye and a more respectful tongue. This Office represents to you, in type and similitude, the Ministry of God Himself, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, towards you His erring creature, His anxiously sought and tenderly beloved child. When you see your earthly Pastor entering the house of sickness or sorrow ; when you hear his voice as he pleads with you in the Church, in the name of the Redeemer above, concerning truth and holiness, concerning resurrection and the life to come ; bethink yourself what a speaking sign is here of a mercy that will not forsake, of a love that will not let you sleep on and die. Where he

fails in his work, where he fails in his example, have compassion, and judge not. The flock is the loser when the Shepherd sleeps or is weary. Cling the more closely to the heavenly Pastor, if the earthly disappoints or deceives you. He will not disappoint, he will not deceive, if you will but act towards him on the principle which Scripture prescribes—

*Obey them that have the guidance of you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable, not for them only, but for you.*

*Brethren, pray for us.*

## X.

### CHRIST'S DISMISSALS.

#### MARK VIII. 9.

*And He sent them away.*

THE word is a very gentle one. It expresses no dismissal, no expulsion, no banishment from the presence—but the tenderest possible release and letting go, after the kindest possible reception and entertainment. There is another word in the Greek—sometimes rendered in the same form by our Translators—which has not half the gentleness and sweetness of this. That other word occurs in a later verse of this very chapter; and it is there rightly translated, *He left them*. That is the word for Christ's parting with enemies—like the



Pharisees of that paragraph, who had been demanding of Him a sign from heaven : or, at best, for His close of a passing connection with mere outside hearers ; as when, in the fourth chapter of this Gospel, we read, *When they had sent away the multitudes*—or, more properly, *leaving the multitudes—they took Him, even as He was, in the ship*. But here it is otherwise : the “sending away” here described is that tender personal release which Christ gave, and which He made a point of, and laid stress upon, in the case of those who had received from Him a personal benefit, which He would engrave upon their hearts by a closing word and by a parting benediction.

But it is especially in one connection that we have this careful “sending away” dwelt upon. Again and again, both in St. Matthew and St. Mark, and (though less pointedly) in St. Luke, it is annexed to the miracles of the table spread in the wilderness. The text closes the second of these miracles—the feeding of the four thousand with the seven loaves. But the same feature belongs to

the earlier miracle also—the feeding of the five thousand with the five loaves. In that former instance our Lord insisted upon being left alone to give the release. *He constrained His disciples to get into the ship, and to go before Him to the other side of the lake, while He*—St. Mark says, *He Himself—sent the multitudes away.* Evidently He attached some special significance to this personal dismissal. He would do it, and do it alone. He might, as at other times, have just “left” them—the other word—got into the vessel, and gone away with the twelve. But He would not. He would stay behind, “send away” the guests, and even then not hasten to follow the ship, but retire into the mountain to pray between the two miracles—the feeding of the multitudes, and the walking on the sea.

Superficial readers of Scripture miss these “signs.” Like the Pharisees, they are but too clamorous for *a sign from heaven* of the truth of the Gospel, of the Divinity of Christ. But, meanwhile, they have no eye for the tokens which are vouchsafed. It is in these little incidental vestiges

and footprints of Jesus, that they who wait for Him see so much of Him—see Him manifesting Himself, not in wind or earthquake or fire, but in that still small voice which is at once so human and so Divine.

*He sent them away.*

It was evidently a work of time and of toil, which He thus undertook. We imagine a careful, courteous, individual farewell. We picture to ourselves the Divine Host taking leave separately of His guests. Each one of the four thousand was to have his parting word. And that parting word must be from the Master, not from the servant. It was of no use that the twelve disciples should stay to assist Him. We can fancy the disappointment which would have befallen any one of the multitude, whose heart was still glowing with the gratitude of that supernatural feast, if he had been put off with a deputed farewell. Never again, on that side of the sea of Galilee, might there be a chance of seeing and speaking with the Divine Friend. Let them seize it now. Yes, He will indulge each one with that pressure of the hand, with that sunshine of

the eye, which cannot be sent by letter nor represented by delegation.

(1) We see here *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in His attention to small matters. The substantial boon was the miracle. You might say, That was enough. No one could forget that, or be insensible to that—all else was surplusage: Such was not His judgment. Who has not had experience, in human intercourse, how the whole zest and charm of a benefit may be diminished, may be destroyed, by the manner of it? how a cold reception, or a formal parting may turn a compliment into an insult? how the omission, even the accidental omission, of a last word, may be felt as a slight, or resented as an injury? It is in little things that life is lived—Christ would stamp courtesy itself with the signet of His benediction.

(2) It is akin to this remark, to notice how Christ loves, and gives the example of, order, deliberation, tranquillity, in all things. He teaches us how fatal to the effect, to the efficiency therefore, of any work, is the very appearance of haste and

precipitancy. If ever there was One in human form whose time was precious, surely it was *the Creator and Preserver of all mankind*. Who could say that the work of that day was not duly ended, when the care of the souls of that multitude had been followed by the care of famishing bodies, and when nothing remained but their departure to their homes? Who might not think that he honoured Christ by remembering the other multitudes, and the other works of teaching and benefiting, which must wait His leisure from this? Yet we find Him not only calm and patient through the day's unspeakable toil, but refusing rest, postponing even devotion, till He has crowned the benefit with the benediction. Himself, alone, He will as calmly, as patiently, "dismiss;" and then He will rest—in other words, then He will pray. O, how many a good work has been spoiled by haste! How often has the kind deed been neutralized by the hurry, by the impatience, of the doing! How often has the seed of charity not been "sown with blessings," and the receiver felt but half the gift, because, unlike Christ, the giver was too much

preoccupied to "dismiss" him with benediction! Let us sit at His feet and learn how the busiest of men may make "business" availing, by the simple remembrance that, what there is time to do, there is time to do thoroughly, and time to do well.

(3) We may draw yet another lesson from this solemn "sending away:" and it is, the importance attached by our Master to closing scenes, to last words, to parting seasons. He seems to have felt that as much depends upon the going as upon the coming. These four thousand people about the number gathered (perhaps) under the Dome of St. Paul's Cathedral at one of its great functions of worship—have had all that they are to have, for this time, of spiritual or bodily nutriment: how can they be too hastily, too hurriedly, got rid of? Who would think of taking leave, at the doors of some great Cathedral, of the dispersing vanishing multitude? Impossible—who would not say?—impossible, and idle! But the Divine Host takes eave of His guests. He thinks as much of the staying behind to dismiss, as of the teaching

or the feeding which has been the business of the meeting.

Christ, I say, knows the value of an orderly dismissal. He attaches importance to the last end of everything—whether it be Service, or season, or circumstance, or human life.

Brethren, dear brethren! We have reached the end, this morning, of a meeting which I trust we shall long remember with pleasure and with thankfulness. It is not probable that we shall ever again, in this life, all be assembled. There is a sadness in the happiest meeting—for it tells as much of parting as of gathering, of dispersion as of union. It is no exaggeration, to my own feeling at least, to speak of this last service as one of the “orderly dismissals” of Jesus Christ. Let us wait for it. Let us see Him present amongst us this morning—first to spread His table in the wilderness, first to feed us with His spiritual food, and then, Himself, to send us away.

Yes, we are going back now to our work and to our labour—and we cannot go without His blessing. May He “dismiss” us here, to meet us there—to be

with us "all the days," according to His promise, till our great change come.

*He sent them away.*

It is the very word, in the Greek, of the "Nunc Dimittis." *Lord, now sendest Thou away Thy servant, according to Thy word—for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.*

There is before each one of us one "dismissal," in which happy is he for whom Christ is present. That calm, orderly, tranquil departure, at which Christ officiates—that going away to be with Christ—that evening of life's day, of one colour and one climate with the day, yet softer, sweeter, calmer, brighter, than any one previous hour of it—meet antitype of the "dismissal" which has been our subject! O may we so live, as expectants of that evening! May there be no necessity for any such wrench and reversal of the being, as shall place the evening at utter variance with the noonday and with the morning! In other words, let us abide with Christ all the day long, hearing His word, living upon His supplies, and calmly waiting for His calm *Dimitto*. Brethren! all the value of



His Church's Ordinances, all the value of His Pastors' Ministries, lies in this conformation of the life to the death—in this knitting into one of the hope of the end and the experience of the present. *Break off thy sins by righteousness* is the counsel of the day—*make haste, prolong not the time to keep God's commandments*—so shall there be no haste and no confusion when the Lord of life and death sends thee away here that He may meet thee there. *He sent them away*, with words of love and blessing—sent them, went with, and met them: *though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, they fear no evil—for He is with them—His rod and His staff comfort them.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord—for ever.*



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